

"MR. BUTTLES"—A COMPLETE NOVEL
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**THE
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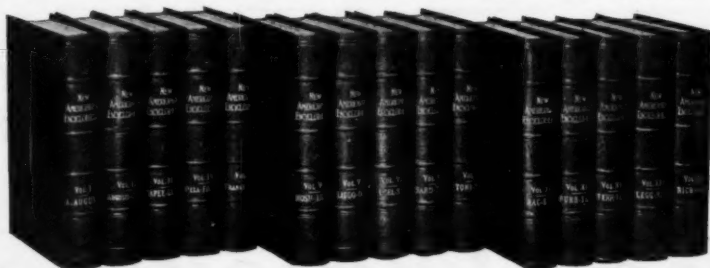
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New York

MR. BUTTLES

By FREDERIC ARNOLD KUMMER

MR. BUTTLES creaked ponderously into the hall. Ponderosity was one of Mr. Buttles's chief attributes. The autumn sunlight was streaming through the mulioned windows, lighting up the great hall at Everdun Towers with the pleasantly mellow glow of early afternoon. From the fleeting expression of anger which crossed Mr. Buttles's unctuous countenance, it was evident that he was annoyed—more annoyed, in fact, than his exceptional training as a butler usually permitted him to be. Meeting Mrs. Wiggles, the housekeeper, at the foot of the great stairway, she took occasion to comment upon this fact, in becoming terms, as befitted their relative positions.

"Mercy, Mr. Buttles," observed she, "is it bad news you've received?"

"Ah, madam," he replied, in his grand manner, inherited through many generations of butlers and much envied by second men and such, "you are right, you are quite right, madam."

"And may I ask what it is, Mr. Buttles?"

"You may, madam, you may, though it is not with pleasure that I tell you. His Lordship intends closing the Towers, madam." Mr. Buttles fixed her with a solemn and almost tearful eye and an aspect most aggrieved.

"Oh, is that all?" Mrs. Wiggles laughed. "Why, I know about that, of course—but how can it affect you, Mr. Buttles?"

The rueful countenance of Mr. Buttles grew, if anything, more dismal. "Me, madam?" he almost wept. "Me? Who, madam, I arks you, should it affect, if not me—I say, if not me?"

"But why, Mr. Buttles?"

"'Eavens, madam," ejaculated that worthy, dropping a shower of aspirates in his suppressed excitement, "no h'entertainin' this year, no shootin', no 'untin', no 'ouse parties, and, madam, no tips! I say, no *tips*! Think of it, madam! I am ruined!"

"But I don't understand," began Mrs. Wiggles mildly. "How can it particularly affect you, even though most of the other servants will have to go?"

Mr. Buttles looked surprised. "Is it possible, madam, that you do not know the terms upon which for seven long years I have served his Lordship in the capacity—the respectable, and indeed, I may say, highly responsible capacity of butler?"

"Why, no, Mr. Buttles, I can't say as how I do."

"Then, madam, I will inform you. Each year I have had to pay his Lordship for that privilege a considerable, indeed, I may say, a werry considerable sum—which has steadily grown larger, as the h'establishment has grown more h'extensive. This year, madam, I pays his Lordship the large, indeed, madam, I may say, the werry large sum of two pounds per week—two pounds per week, madam, and he wanted to make it guineas!" Mr. Buttles here trembled visibly upon the verge of tears.

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Mrs. Wiggles. "Is it possible? Then where, may I ask, Mr. Buttles, do you come in?"

Mr. Buttles smiled complacently. "That, madam, if I do say it as shouldn't, is a matter of 'igh finance."

Each of the under servants pays me, when I engages them, a certain proportion of their wages—a proportion, madam, fixed by me—and with the Towers full of guests, and 'ouse parties, and such like, the contributions, the voluntary contributions, of them we h'entertains pays us all 'andsomely—'andsomely, I say. With the Towers closed, wot remains, madam? I arks you. What remains? How can I pay his Lordship? I am ruined—ruined!"

Mr. Buttles's emotions seemed again about to completely engulf him, but before Mrs. Wiggles had a chance to reply, there was heard from without the honk, honk of an automobile, while the grinding of wheels in the gravel roadway indicated that it was even then stopping before the main entrance of the castle. Mrs. Wiggles beat a hasty retreat, and Mr. Buttles, enveloping himself in his grand air as though in a mantle, began a magnificent progress toward the door. Before he had reached it, however, it was thrown open and the Earl of Everdun entered, followed by Ferguson, his man, carrying a pair of gun cases. The Earl, or Arthur, as his friends called him (with his intimates it became Archie) was a well-built young fellow of about thirty, wearing a cap and a long automobile coat over his rough tweed suit. He appeared intensely bored, which was a habit—and as he entered, lit a cigarette and gazed languidly at Mr. Buttles.

"Well—we're here, Buttles. Ferguson, put the guns in the gun room."

Mr. Buttles bowed. "So I see, me Lord, so I see," he replied. "I hope your Lordship intends making a long stay."

"Nonsense," replied the Earl sharply. "I must be off at once. Only came down to get some clothes and things."

"And is your Lordship returning to-day?"

"Certainly. Why not?" replied the Earl, and he started toward the stairway.

"But, me Lord," Mr. Buttles made a rapid flank movement to intercept him, "I have something to say."

"H'm," replied the Earl, "you generally have, Buttles. Well, say it and be quick, if that's possible." He sank boredly into a chair and busied himself looking at a time-card.

Mr. Buttles plunged without further parley *in medias res*. "Me Lord, I have been informed that your Lordship intends closing the Towers this season. Am I right?"

Lord Everdun turned slowly. "Damn your impudence, what's that to you?"

Mr. Buttles smiled blandly, but without mirth. "A werry great deal, me Lord, a werry great deal, beggin' your Lordship's pardon for bein' so bold."

"You were to be retained in any event." Lord Everdun regarded him with a quizzical smile.

"Yes, me Lord, I had supposed I was—most certainly, me Lord, but how, may I arsk, does your Lordship expect me to get a livin'?"

Lord Everdun appeared interested in spite of himself. "Eh—a living—what the devil are you driving at, Buttles?"

Mr. Buttles smiled again—a pained smile as who should say—"I must be patient with him." "Much as I dislikes, me Lord, to refer to such sordid commercial matters, I beg to call your Lordship's attention to the arrangements now existing between us, arrangements proposed by your Lordship's own self, whereby I pays your Lordship the sum of two pounds per week for the privilege of serving your Lordship in the capacity of butler."

"H'm, yes," replied the Earl; "I recollect. What of it?"

"Is it possible that your Lordship does not understand *why* I agreed to that arrangement?"

"No, Buttles, I'm damned if I do." His Lordship yawned; the conversation evidently bored him.

"Then, me Lord," Mr. Buttles hastened to reply, "I will explain. For years you have kept open house at the Towers. Your house parties have been the talk of the county, and my tips, beggin' your Lordship's pardon, have been numerous—numerous and large;

without them I am a bankrupt, a bankrupt, me Lord."

His Lordship laughed in spite of himself. "Gad, I never thought of that. It's serious, isn't it? I'm depriving you, as it were, of your victims."

"Oh, no; oh, no, me Lord! Not wic-tims, me Lord." Mr. Buttles appeared horrified at the thought. "I'm sure as how the small contributions has been entirely woluntary, entirely woluntary, me Lord."

"Well, perhaps so; at least you haven't bound and gagged them. But you can hardly expect me to keep the Towers open for *your* benefit."

"Oh, no, me Lord; on the contrary. Therefore I begs permission to place before your Lordship a business proposition; I say a business proposition."

The Earl fixed him with his monocle. "Well," he inquired shortly, "what is it? You know I'm dead broke and can't afford the pace here."

Mr. Buttles advanced a pace, eagerness shining in every line of his cherubic face. "Ah, me Lord, that is just the point. Let *me* run the Towers."

Even Lord Everdun's usual impassivity was not proof against this. "You?" he almost shouted. "Are you mad?"

"Not at all, me Lord, not at all. I have formed a stock company, me Lord, for that very purpose, to be called 'Buttles, Limited,' me Lord. The other servants are all with me. Your Lordship furnishes the guests, we does the rest; and for the use of the premises, and the services of your Lordship, beggin' your Lordship's pardon for bein' so bold, we offers to pay your Lordship the sum of five hundred pounds for the season."

Lord Everdun lay back in his chair and roared. "Buttles," he gasped, "you will be the death of me yet. Really, you're wasting your talents. You ought to be a humorist, not a butler. Why, you'd make a hotel of the place."

"Not werry different, me Lord, from what it has been in the past."

"By Jove, you're right there." The Earl looked thoughtful. "And what, may I ask, would be my—ah—duties?"

"Just keep the house full of guests, me Lord, same as always. We'll do the rest."

Lord Everdun rose and lit a fresh cigarette. "That's easy," he said, a trifle bitterly. "I invite a lot of people down here, half of whom I hardly know, and the other half I know too well. They eat my dinners, drink my wines, hunt, flirt and spoil the shooting, and at the end of the week go somewhere else and do it all over again. For all I have to do with it, I might as well be a lay figure."

Mr. Buttles nodded approvingly. "Quite so, me Lord," he replied.

"What!" said the Earl, not exactly pleased with this ready acquiescence. "Well, no doubt it's true. Why should I be bored with all these people? I'm tired of it. I'm going to call all my invitations off. And besides, I want to go to Paris."

"A werry expensive place, I'm told, me Lord," Mr. Buttles ventured.

"That depends," the Earl began. Then, hearing sounds of a carriage passing over the gravel of the drive without, he said suddenly, "What's that?"

"The trap, me Lord, goin' to the station for the American ladies as is expected this afternoon. The cart will bring up Captain Flatsaddle and his party, and the others comes up in the phaeton."

Lord Everdun bounded out of his chair as though he had suddenly sat upon a tack. "What!" he roared; "you don't mean they're coming *today*? Why, I thought it was *next* week, and I intended writing tonight recalling the invitations."

"*This* week, me Lord, so your Lordship informed me—your Lordship's own orders. What about my proposition?"

"Proposition? What proposition? Oh, yes, I forgot. This is a rum go."

At this moment the door of the hall was again thrown open, and a well-built young fellow dressed as a chauffeur entered. His clean-cut, intellectual face and general air of refinement seemed in striking contrast with the

nature of his position. He approached the Earl. "Shall you want the car again this afternoon, sir?" he inquired, with a tone and manner that indicated no conception of any social gulf between his employer and himself. Lord Everdun gazed abstractedly at him for several moments before replying. At last he turned to Buttles.

"Buttles, look at this man." Mr. Buttles did so in that superior manner which, by right of his position as butler, he felt the occasion demanded.

"Yes, me Lord," he replied loftily; "I see him, me Lord."

"He is Huggins, my new chauffeur."

"Quite so, me Lord. Pleased to make the gentleman's acquaintance."

"Does he resemble me?"

"Well, me Lord, beggin' your Lordship's pardon, he does, me Lord. I observed it the moment he entered."

"Very much?"

"Strikingly, me Lord, I'm pained to say; strikingly." From Mr. Buttles's intonation one might have thought that he regarded the very evident resemblance between the Earl and his chauffeur as a form of liberty which Huggins should be severely reprimanded for having taken.

Lord Everdun looked at him with a twinkle in his eye. "Pained—pained—why, Buttles, you ought to be delighted, delighted, do you hear? I'm going to accept your offer—by proxy, at least, and Huggins shall take my place."

"What!" gasped Mr. Buttles. "What! I think, me Lord—"

"Never mind what you think, Buttles; it's of no importance. I'm going to Paris to spend the magnificent salary you have offered me, and Huggins—Huggins shall be *me*. Isn't that a bully idea—what?" The object of these remarks, evidently having failed to grasp their import, stood staring at the Earl in blank amazement.

"But, me Lord," Mr. Buttles ventured.

Lord Everdun seized his automobile cap. "Never mind, Buttles; don't interrupt. It's all arranged." Saying which, he rushed to the foot of the

stairway, calling loudly, "Ferguson, my luggage, quick! I must be off."

Huggins had by this time awaked from his trance. He turned and strode toward the Earl. "What," he began, "do you intend—"

The Earl cut him short with a gesture. "Arrange everything with Buttles, Huggins," he said. "He has a much better head for business than I have." And he started toward the door. Huggins, however, appeared to be bursting. "Stop!" he cried; "this is infamous—I will not—"

The Earl again waved him aside. "Talk it over with Buttles," he said; "I'm off."

The chauffeur seemed to be getting more and more angry every moment. "I'm damned if I will!" he howled. "Do you suppose for a moment—" but by this time the Earl had reached the door, and his parting advice as he left the hall to "talk it over with Buttles" only left Huggins standing in an attitude of helpless fury, under the coldly serene eye of the imperturbable Mr. Buttles.

"It's not every day, young man," observed that worthy, "that you has a chance to be an earl."

Huggins turned. "No, thank God! He must be mad."

But Mr. Buttles was not to be turned from his muttons. "I have no doubt, young man," he remarked, "as how you'll do fairly well, with such hints as I may be able to give you—fairly well."

Huggins looked at him with fury in his eye. "See here, my man," he said, and his tone filled Mr. Buttles with a vague sense of disaster. "I'm no chauffeur; not regularly, that is. I'm a newspaper correspondent, an author—a playwright—a poet—do you understand, you idiot?"

Mr. Buttles smiled blandly, understandingly. "Ah, yes, sir; I see, sir—sort of song-writer do you mean, sir? Well, sir, that may be against you, sir, but you needn't let on, need you?"

"You infernal ass; my name's Hemingway. I'm a man—a thinker, a Socialist, a student of Nietzsche, and a disciple of Bernard Shaw. I'm

running this car for a lark, and because I believe in the dignity of labor. Would you have me everlastingly disgraced by impersonating an earl? It's impossible."

"I should regard it as an honor, sir—a great honor." Mr. Buttles's tone was one of reproof.

"What me, *me*—Hemingway, the writer on Socialism—the author of 'Puppets and Peers,' masquerading as that creature of mere birth, that titled nincompoop? Why, it's infamous, *preposterous!*"

Mr. Buttles looked pained, deeply pained. "Too bad, too bad," he replied. "Is it as serious as all that, sir? I'm afraid as how you're in for it, sir."

"In for it?" hurled the chauffeur. "The devil I am! I won't do it."

"Oh, come now, sir, you won't find it hard, sir. All you'll have to do is just walk about, and look pleasant, sir. You needn't say anything, sir; they won't expect it of you, sir. His Lordship never does, sir."

"What!" roared Huggins. "What! Not say anything? Why, you blithering idiot, I couldn't live a minute without saying *something*."

Buttles smiled blandly. Evidently such trifling obstacles meant nothing to him. "Couldn't you say it sort of *sotto wotche*, sir?" he suggested. The chauffeur's reply was interrupted by the sudden entrance of the Earl, followed by Ferguson staggering under a load of portmanteaus and other luggage, which he carried out to the waiting motor. Lord Everdun evidently regarded the whole matter as settled.

"Here, Huggins," he began briskly, "hurry and get into your make-up. Ferguson will fit you out."

"I'll not endure this disgraceful humiliation." Huggins's tone was final.

"Huggins, my man, you forget yourself. Remember that I engaged you for the season, and paid you a liberal advance."

"As chauffeur, sir—as chauffeur."

"True, true." His Lordship's manner was most engaging. "Now I want you to be the Earl of Everdun. Much

less fatiguing, Huggins, and surely no less honorable."

"I disagree with you entirely—uncompromisingly."

Mr. Buttles, who had meanwhile been regarding Huggins with a severely critical air—coughed discreetly. "He has werry strange idees, me Lord—werry strange indeed. I'm afraid as how his mind ain't equal to it."

The chauffeur's face was a study. "Merciful heavens!" he said. "Not equal to it!—not equal to it! Is this a dream?"

Lord Everdun seized his advantage at once. "Hurry now," he said, in his most ingratiating way; "that's a good fellow. Do it for me—won't you, as a personal favor? You'll oblige me greatly, and I do so want to go to Paris."

It was evident that Huggins was weakening. "No, no," he murmured to himself, "not equal to it. Good Lord!" He seemed in a sort of daze, and passing his hand over his brow, he regarded Lord Everdun with a look of uncertainty. The Earl felt that he was winning. "Go on now, that's a good fellow," he remarked. "I don't doubt you'll find it no end of a lark. Think of the opportunity it will afford you to study the upper classes at close range." Then, seeing his man was wavering, he turned to Buttles. "He'll do," he said.

Mr. Buttles appeared uncertain, regarding the chauffeur with a look of coldness. "I don't know, me Lord," he replied. "He seems a trifle queer, me Lord, a trifle queer; off his nut, so to speak, I should say."

"Never mind; he'll do," Lord Everdun said gaily. Then, hearing without the sounds of approaching vehicles, he turned quickly. "Here comes the first instalment. Quick, Huggins, Ferguson will fix you up"; and despite his feeble protests the unfortunate Huggins was led away by Ferguson, who had returned from without.

Lord Everdun turned to Buttles. "Here, Buttles," he said, "I must get out of this. I'll drive the car down myself. Have Roberts send my trunks

up by the five-forty-five train. Good-bye, and send my—ah—salary to my solicitors." Waving his hand to them gaily, he started off, laughing heartily. The approaching visitors, however, were much nearer than he had anticipated. Hardly had he more than half crossed the hall, when the front door was opened by one of the footmen, and with a gay whirl of laughter, the first arrivals were upon him. A tall, striking-looking girl, in a smart gray tailor-made suit, came in, followed by a middle-aged man, whose erect carriage, fiery red complexion, and bristling mustache bespoke the army man in every line. It was Miss Dottie Dorrington and Captain Billy Flatsaddle, of the Shropshire Fusileers. The Earl stood, a picture of dismay, regarding his newly-arrived guests. Flatsaddle eyed him blandly. "Bully cob, that, Archie, old boy," he remarked. "Want to sell him?" Before the Earl had an opportunity to reply, Miss Dorrington swept up to him.

"Archie, your roads are beastly dusty. I must look a fright. How about tea?"

Lord Everdun, crestfallen, turned and gazed maliciously at Buttles. "By Jove!" he muttered; "too late."

Captain Flatsaddle looked at him curiously. "What's the matter, old chap?" he asked. "Off your feed? You look fit enough." Then, apparently dismissing the subject from his mind, he turned to Buttles. "Here Buttles, where's the soda?" He glanced toward a table in the corner, containing decanters and glasses. Buttles promptly produced a siphon from a cellarette. "Here, sir; yes, sir; thank you, sir," he remarked, eying Lord Everdun cautiously from the corner of his eye the while.

"I don't think you are a bit nice, Archie," said Miss Dorrington, as she rejoined the Captain. "I think I'll have one, too"—she indicated the whisky and soda. "I wonder where auntie is?" As she spoke, another vehicle approached the door. "Here she is now," she cried, as her aunt, Mrs. Tipton, followed by a stout, pompous-

looking individual, entered. Mrs. Tipton was the relict of a very wealthy merchant, who had gracefully departed this life within five short years of his marriage, leaving his young widow with an ample fortune, a fine figure and a charming predilection for playing the part of chaperon to her attractive niece. Her companion, the Honorable James Bagshot, Member of Parliament from Little Twickenham, appreciating the figure both of Mrs. Tipton and her fortune at their proper value, made himself her constant companion. They greeted the somewhat crestfallen Everdun with enthusiasm, and seemed not to observe his preoccupation. Flatsaddle sang out from the corner, "I say, where's Pummy?" this being the name applied to Sir Percy Palmerston by his intimate friends.

"You ought to know," replied the Honorable James.

"I? Upon my word, why?" answered the Captain.

"Isn't he coming down with your wife?" Bagshot spoke as though the matter admitted of no dispute.

"Pon my soul, I don't know. How could I be expected to know. It's unreasonable."

"Oh, well," said Bagshot, "I thought you might, you know. She's *your* wife, you know—not mine."

Captain Flatsaddle drank his whisky and soda with a relish and smacked his lips with the fine air of a connoisseur. "Why, I haven't seen her for months," he replied. "Our hours are so different, you know. She generally seems to be asleep when I am awake, and all that sort of thing. I meet her occasionally, accidentally—just happens that way, you know."

Captain Flatsaddle's dissertation upon his domestic affairs was interrupted by the arrival of the remainder of the party, consisting of Mrs. Flatsaddle, a modish-looking woman in a jaunty suit of khaki, and Sir Percy Palmerston, who followed her about with the air of a well-trained Angora cat. Mrs. Flatsaddle nodded to Lord Everdun with a "Hello, Archie,"—seemed surprised to see her husband until she caught

sight of Miss Dorrington, then joined the others in a whisky and soda.

The last arrivals were Mrs. Flighter, the wife of a Chicago millionaire, and her daughter Sallie—whom the Earl, with his customary largeness of ideas, had invited to the Towers after a chance meeting at Ascot. Mr. Flighter was to arrive later. The Flighters greeted the Earl impetuously, especially Mrs. Flighter, a stout, middle-aged woman, elaborately overdressed, whose high-pitched voice made the Earl quiver visibly. Sallie, her daughter, was charming. The Earl, as he returned her greetings, almost regretted for the moment that he had decided to leave for Paris. Certainly, in her trim-looking traveling suit of silver-gray, with hat and plume to match, with her splendid complexion, her dark-brown hair and eyes and her superb figure, Sallie was good to look upon.

Lord Everdun did not waste much time upon the contemplation of these charms, however. The situation was becoming alarming—Huggins would be back with Ferguson in a few moments—it was necessary to get rid of these people somehow. He called Mr. Buttles to him with a gesture. "Get these people to their rooms, can't you? Where's Mrs. Wiggles?"

Mr. Buttles, sharing his fears, hastened to summon the housekeeper, and with the assistance of several of the under servants, the various guests were quickly conducted to their respective rooms, with their luggage, leaving the Earl and Mr. Buttles once more alone. Lord Everdun lit another cigarette nervously. "Buttles," he said, "I'll be back in a moment. Wait for me here. I must get out of this somehow," and he, too, vanished.

Mr. Buttles strutted about importantly. His plans seemed to be taking definite shape after all. "A rare sportsman, his Lordship," he remarked; "a rare sportsman, but not a financier like some as I could name." It was evident from his expansive smile that Mr. Buttles would have no difficulty in naming at least one. "As for that Huggins," he continued, "it's plain to be seen he's

weak-minded, not to say quite mad. Why, he seemed to regard the idee of bein' an earl as a positive disgrace. What is the country comin' to, I say, when people begin to lose their respect and reverence for the nobility. I calls it nothin' short of criminal. Why, when his Lordship came into the title he hadn't a farthin', and lived in lodgin's, and now—look at him!" He looked up as Ferguson came in leading Huggins along as though he feared he would escape him at any moment. Huggins, dressed in a suit of his Lordship's clothes, appeared furiously angry without apparently being able to vent his anger upon anyone in particular. Mr. Buttles smiled all over himself—his whole body seemed one large, palpitating smile. This was too good to be true. The resemblance was marvelous.

"Amazin', sir, amazin'!" He walked around Huggins admiringly. "I never saw such a change in my life."

The chauffeur seemed to boil over. "Good Lord," he snapped, "is it as bad as that? I thought I might have preserved some lingering semblance of intelligence."

Mr. Buttles ignored his remark entirely. "Well, me Lord—sir, I means—we've got 'em, ten fine ones. A fair start, sir, a fair start." He rubbed his hands.

"Vampire!" cried Huggins in impotent fury. "I'll have nothing to do with the whole affair; nothing. Do you understand? I refuse absolutely. Where's the Earl? I must see him at once!"

A most dismal change came over the smiling face of Mr. Buttles at these ominous words. He looked deeply pained, and that look with Mr. Buttles was perfection indeed. He gazed at the chauffeur with an air of deepest concern. "Why, sir," he exclaimed, "you seem quite excited again, sir. You won't find it hard, sir. I thought as how you had agreed, sir, and now—you've changed about again, sir. Why, you'll spoil everythink, sir. You will indeed."

Huggins shook his finger at him in

wrath. "I tell you I won't do it. Never! Never! Do you understand?"

As he spoke the Earl rushed in with a valise in his hand. "What's this I hear?" he cried.

"This joke has gone far enough!" shouted Huggins, turning upon him.

Lord Everdun smiled his most winning smile. "Exactly, Huggins," he replied, "quite so. From now on I want you to take the matter seriously. I'm leaving everything in your hands, you know."

"It isn't possible," began Huggins.

"Oh, yes it is. Here, Ferguson, take this bag." He tossed the valise to his man, and turned to the door. "Good-bye; I know you'll enjoy it." And before the chauffeur realized it he was climbing into his car.

Huggins rushed to the door, shouting after him, "Here, come back, come back, I say!" but Lord Everdun only smiled as the car swept down the drive.

"Good-bye," he shouted. "Do the best you can. When you don't know what to do, ask Buttles."

"Well, I'll be damned!" Huggins turned from the door with disgust written in every line of his face.

"Quite so, me Lord," said Mr. Buttles.

CHAPTER TWO

The Pseudo-Lord Falls in Love

DURING the ensuing week Mr. Buttles's smile became broader and broader. Captain Flatsaddle, Sir Percy, the Honorable James, had all been most generous. The latter had complained that the morning light in his room disturbed him—which, since he was in the west wing, seemed a trifle peculiar, but upon having his apartments changed into others which happened to be not far removed from those of Mrs. Tipton, the Honorable James, in a burst of generosity, had presented Mr. Buttles with twenty pounds. Mr. Buttles had also arranged many little matters for Captain Flatsaddle and the others. The American ladies in particular had realized all his expectations. The ex-

chequer of "Buttles, Limited," was beginning to take on those proportions commensurate with the paying of a dividend. And just at this juncture, the apprehensive eye of Mr. Buttles discerned the approach of trouble—of disaster, which merited all his skill to avoid.

The nature of this trouble arose from the "goings on," as Mr. Buttles called it, between Huggins—or Hemingway, as we should perhaps term him—and the American heiress, Miss Sallie Flighter. Mr. Buttles was distinctly worried. He was standing on the terrace, arranging glasses and decanters upon a small rustic table at the entrance to the pergola. His gaze swept the famous rose gardens of the castle, beyond which the velvety green lawns sloped down toward the distant village. Over the hedge which separated the terrace from the gardens he saw the approaching head of Hemingway. The vague alarm in his mind suddenly took concrete form. "I wonder where Miss Flighter is?" he muttered. "He follows her about like a bloomin' shadow. It's werry dangerous—werry—suppose—'eaven 'elp us!" In moments of excitement Mr. Buttles always dropped his aspirates. "Suppose 'e should fall in love with 'er!" The idea left him horror-stricken—a glass crashed to the ground—something, indeed, which had not occurred in Mr. Buttles's family for generations.

As Hemingway approached he pulled himself together. "Good afternoon, me Lord," he managed to gasp.

"It isn't necessary for you to insist upon using that absurd title in private, is it?" Hemingway said, visibly annoyed.

"It's the place I honors, not the man, me Lord," replied Mr. Buttles suavely.

"Confound you, don't you know that to be a *man* is infinitely more than to have any kind of a title? Generally they are all rot anyway; don't mean anything, and are the result of mere accident."

"It's a cheering thought, no doubt, sir." Mr. Buttles forced a genial smile. "Me brother, him as is a cor-

poral in the Lancashire Rifles, sir—he's a Socialist, too, sir. Says as how he's just as good as his colonel, sir. It cheers him up wonderful, sir, especially in the mornin'. You see, he's subjeck to fits of the blues, sir. He tried it on a bobby once somewheres around Whitechapel, sir—so he tells me. Said he was a Socialist, sir, and that one man was just as good as another, sir. But he must have been wrong, sir—leastways he looked so, I happenin' to see him at the 'orspital the next day, sir."

"Buttles, you love the very smell of a title; it's born and bred in your bones."

"As for that, sir, I think as how a man can be a gentleman, sir, even if he is an earl, sir. Now there's his Lordship—"

"Oh, I'm not saying anything about Lord Everdun," replied Hemingway. "I don't know anything about him, except that he's got me in a very nasty sort of a hole."

Mr. Buttles looked surprised. "A hole, sir? And how may that be, sir?"

Hemingway gazed at him with a contemplative air. He seemed to be revolving in his mind an important decision. "I wonder," he murmured to himself, "I wonder," then suddenly he burst out, "By Jove, I'll risk it! What I mean is this: I'm in love with Miss Flighter."

"The American heiress, sir?" Mr. Buttles inquired blandly.

"Yes, yes, of course. She's all a girl could be—sweet, beautiful, intelligent, witty—"

"And werry rich, I'm told, sir," interjected Mr. Buttles.

"That has nothing to do with it. The point is that I cannot ask her to marry me because of this ridiculous masquerade, this absurd title. It's a positive affliction."

"Well, sir, there's this about it, sir: you'll get over it, sir, by the end of the winter, sir."

"Get over it—what do you mean? Get over it! Why, I love her with all my heart and soul and—"

"Of course, sir—quite so, sir. I understand that, sir. I mean as how you'll get over the affliction of bein' an

earl, sir, and then you'll be free to arsk her, sir, without any handicap—if so be as she considers it such, sir."

"She! Of course she does. A man's a man in America. There are no titles there."

"Just so, sir," said Mr. Buttles, softly; "just so. That's why so many American ladies comes over here, sir."

Hemingway scowled at him. "That settles it," he exclaimed bitterly; "that settles it. I'll ask her this very day. But before I do, I'll tell her that I'm no empty-headed remnant of twenty misspent generations, but a thinker, a writer, a Socialist, a lover of mankind, a worker for the cause of humanity. I'll let her see what I really am, and then I'll ask her."

Mr. Buttles quivered with terror, not unlike a jellyfish suddenly left stranded upon the rocks. His voice quavered with pathos as he spoke. "Oh, no, sir, not that, sir—I beg of you, sir—don't tell her that you are not the Earl, sir—it would spoil everythink, sir, everythink, and just when 'Buttles, Limited,' is getting a fair start, sir. You wouldn't do that, sir, now, would you, sir?"

Hemingway looked at him scornfully. "Well," he asked with a grim smile, "would you rather have me ask her to marry me *without* telling her who I am?"

This alternative did not seem to strike a responsive chord in Mr. Buttles's consciousness. If anything, he seemed more perturbed than before. "Oh, no, sir," he almost groaned, "by no means, sir; that would be just as bad, sir. You wouldn't do *that*, sir. Don't ask her at all, sir."

Hemingway straightened himself with an air of finality. "Look here, Buttles," he said, and there was no mistaking his meaning, "I got forced into this bally affair through no fault of my own. I didn't want to do it from the start. But if you think I'm going to regulate my love affairs to suit your blackmailing schemes you're very much mistaken, that's all."

"But, sir"—Mr. Buttles was fighting hard now—"you see you *can't* ask her,

sir. Just think what a compromising position it would place his Lordship in, sir."

"Well, he didn't hesitate to put me in a compromising position, did he? Look at me. Here I am, stuck in this ridiculous situation, bored by a lot of imbeciles whom I don't know and don't want to know, in love with a girl I can't ask to marry me, and without a shilling to my name. I can't even get a cheque cashed. My own they wouldn't take without identification, and I can't sign the Earl's without committing forgery."

As Hemingway concluded, a little remnant of a smile began to hover about the corners of Mr. Buttles's mouth—just a faint, tentative suggestion of a smile; Mr. Buttles took out his wallet. He looked at Hemingway eagerly. "Ah—me Lord—sir—allow me. Anything you want, sir. Any little advance now—just call on me." He opened the purse with a flourish and took out some notes. "Would ten pound, sir, be of any use to you, sir? Just say the word. I should consider it a pleasure, sir—just a small matter between gentlemen, sir—and then, you see, I can deduct it from your wages."

"On that condition I'll take it," snapped Hemingway, "as an advance on my wages as chauffeur, or whatever else his Lordship may do me the honor to consider me. Personally, I feel like the court fool."

"Just so, sir." Mr. Buttles handed him the notes and extracted from his capacious breast pocket a small memorandum book. "H'm-m," he reflected, poring over the items, "just so. You're two months ahead, Huggins, two months." He made some figures with the stub of a pencil. "In fact, to be strictly accurate, two months six days. Remember that, Huggins."

"I suppose you mean you own me," Hemingway replied somewhat bitterly, lowering his voice as Mrs. Wiggles crossed the rear of the terrace with a tea tray. Mr. Buttles observed her balefully.

"Oh, no, me Lord; pardon, me Lord; a pleasure, me Lord, which

your Lordship honors me by grantin'," then observing that Mrs. Wiggles had safely passed out of earshot he continued in a different tone:

"And don't try on any of your games with Miss Flighter, Huggins; remember that, too."

As he concluded, a young urchin, answering to the name of Buttons, entered with a tray. He approached Hemingway.

"One of these 'ere newspaper gents waitin' to see you, me Lord," he said in a singsong voice. "Wants a h'inter-view most particular, me Lord. Wants to know if it's true that your Lordship is h'engaged to a h'American heiress, me Lord. Says as 'ow 'e would like to put it in 'is paper, me Lord. Two men from the village, me Lord. Think as 'ow they 'as bills, me Lord. Party with Dundrearys, me Lord, says as 'ow 'e's Squire Barnes, of 'Eath Manor,' me Lord; wants to see you at once, me Lord; says as 'ow the dignity of Church and State must be upheld, me Lord. Think 'e wants money, me Lord. Telegram, me Lord."

Hemingway took the telegram from the tray mechanically. "Heavens, is that all?" he gasped. As he read the message, a curious smile lit up his face. He handed the telegram to Mr. Buttles. "Read that," he said.

Mr. Buttles glanced at the telegram and read:

Why have I not seen you, dearest? The bill for the bracelet isn't settled, also rent for flat. Have you forgotten your baby? Think I'll run down and see you.

GWENDOLYN.

They looked at each other in silence. At last Hemingway spoke. "Gwendolyn?" he said, inquiringly; "Gwendolyn?"

"Yes, me Lord; just so, me Lord," said Mr. Buttles. "I've heard of the lady, me Lord."

"Coming here?" continued Hemingway.

"So it seems, me Lord." Mr. Buttles was thinking hard.

"What's to be done?"

"Leave it to me, me Lord—everythink will be all right, me Lord; leave

all these matters to me; I will attend to them." Mr. Buttles's manner was sublime.

"All right, Buttles, all right; and for heaven's sake don't let that newspaper fellow put anything in his paper, and don't, *don't* let that young person, Gwendolyn, come here. That would be the last straw—Gwendolyn!" As he concluded, Hemingway started for the entrance to the wing of the castle.

Mr. Buttles detained him for a moment. "You won't speak to Miss Flighter, sir—you won't—"

Hemingway turned. "Not at present," he said, as he ascended the steps.

"Thank you, sir; thank you." Mr. Buttles's bow was in itself the very incarnation of thankfulness. "I'll take care of everything, sir, depend on it." Hemingway gone, Mr. Buttles turned to the waiting Buttons, meanwhile placing the telegram carefully in his wallet. "Boy," he said, "say to Squire Barnes that his Lordship is seriously indisposed and regrets that he cannot see him today. Send the bill collectors about their bloomin' business. Tell the newspaper fellow to wait—I'll attend to him; and get me a telegraph form."

"Right-o," responded Buttons, as he departed, whistling gaily.

Mr. Buttles proceeded to take out his memorandum book and began making figures in it, scratching his head meanwhile, as though the labors of a financier, diplomat and butler combined were not of the lightest. "H'm-m," he remarked, "things is getting a bit mixed—just a trifle mixed. H'm—receipts one hundred and thirty pound, six shillin' fourpence. H'm—not so bad, not so bad, for one week. Disbursements—paid, Huggins, ten pound—wines and liquors, nothink. Heaven be praised, the wine cellars are well stocked! Grimes, one pound ten—axle grease. Extravagance, gross extravagance. Unpaid—for beaters extra, four pound five. *They* won't wait, that's certain. Now what can I—ah, I have it, that beautiful '84 Hock—a fine wine—a grand wine—it should

fetch five pound a case easily. I'll have to let a case or two of it go—too bad, too. Mrs. Wiggles, groceries, eighteen pound, ten shillin' sixpence. That means a case of that wonderful Burgundy. Ah, there's a wine for you!" Mr. Buttles's expression was ecstatic, but it quickly changed as he concluded mournfully: "How I grieve to see it go! What a pity—what a pity." His calculations were cut short by the sudden return of Buttons, who precipitated himself from the top step of the entrance to the grass of the terrace with one bound, still whistling.

"Squire's gone," he remarked, "in a 'uff. Newspaper gent h'interviewin' Mrs. Wiggles. Bill collectors 'overin' in the h'offing. What, 'o! me 'earties! Telegraph form, Mr. Buttles."

Mr. Buttles took the form without comment and wrote:

MISS GWENDOLYN MONTMORENCY,
Gaiety Theater, London.

Forgive your careless darling. Have been ill. Will send cheque soon. For heaven's sake don't come here if you love your

ARCHIE.

"H'm," he said, as he read it over. "Sounds a bit mushy—forgive your careless darling! Wonder how much it will take to square *her*. Whatever it is, his Lordship must stand it." Then he turned to Buttons. "Here, boy," he said, "send this at once," and he turned to go.

"'Adn't yer better give me the coin?" Buttons called after him.

Mr. Buttles turned. "Send it collect," he replied; "send it collect, me boy, then the lady will be sure to get it."

Buttons, left to himself, grinned cheerfully and proceeded to read the message. "Gwendolyn," he said, rolling the name on his tongue as he might a lollipop. "Aw, ain't it the lovely name—me Gwendolyn!" and he clasped the telegram to his chest in an ecstasy of dramatic joy. "My eye," he exclaimed suddenly, "there's that one Mrs. Wiggles gave me. Better send it collect, too; that'll put me in just one and six." He fished a crumpled tele-

graph form from his pocket and proceeded to read it.

EARL OF EVERDUN,
Grand Hotel, Paris.

If you don't come back at once you will be married before you know it.

SUSAN WIGGLES.

Buttons gazed about him in blank amazement. "My eye, now wouldn't that upset your apple cart? 'Is Lordship ain't in Paris; 'e's 'ere." Again he struck a tragic attitude, from which it was easy to be seen that Buttons had been reading sixpenny shockers. "Hist," he declaimed, "'tis false, Lord Arthur Fitz-Eustace! Me blood may not be as blue as yours, but Gwendolyn Montmorency, the plumber's daughter, will yet have her r-r-revenge. Ha! Ha!"

This matter having been duly and satisfactorily disposed of, Buttons strode from the terrace, whistling a popular air.

CHAPTER THREE

Mr. Buttles Becomes Involved

AFTER disposing of the newspaper reporter most diplomatically, Mr. Buttles felt that, for the present at least, his difficulties and troubles were over. He returned to the terrace quite well satisfied with himself, and continued supervising the arrangements for tea. Hardly had he reached there when Captain Flatsaddle, just back from a gallop with Miss Dorrington, sought him out.

"Buttles," he said, "we want your help." Mr. Buttles turned and executed his ever ready bow. "Yes, sir; thank you, sir. Anythink I can do for Mrs. Flatsaddle and yourself, sir?"

Captain Flatsaddle looked sourly at him. "I didn't say anything about Mrs. Flatsaddle, did I?" he growled.

"You said *we*, sir. I'm afraid I don't quite understand, sir."

"Yes, you do," growled the Captain. "I mean Miss Dorrington and myself. We're going to elope tonight."

Mr. Buttles, by a mighty effort, almost succeeded in showing no sur-

prise. "Elope, sir!" he stammered—"Oh, indeed, sir—quite so, sir; sorry to lose you, sir—what can I do, sir?"

"Have my luggage, and hers, sent down for the eleven-forty tonight, and have a trap ready for us at eleven, at the east entrance, and say nothing to anyone—do you understand?"

"Quite well, sir. In fact, if I do say it myself, sir, I've had considerable experience in such matters. This will be my eighth case, sir, and I'm proud to say they was all pulled off without a hitch."

"The devil you say!" exclaimed the Captain.

"Oh, yes, sir. My only regret is, I've never seen any of the parties since. Seems like they has wanished complete, sir."

Captain Flatsaddle looked thoughtful.

"H'm-m," he mused. "They usually do, don't they?"

"Just so, sir. I always heard 'em say as how they wanted particular to wander 'and-in-'and along the shores of the sea, sir. Perhaps they went to Brighton, sir, or such like places."

Captain Flatsaddle looked at him suspiciously. "Buttles," he growled, "you talk too much. But you've taken good care of me. Here's twenty pounds. Don't fail me, now." And he strode into the house.

"Thank you, sir. Werry kind of you; werry kind indeed, sir," said Mr. Buttles as the Captain disappeared. Then to himself: "Not so bad—not so bad—perhaps we can get as much more from the lady, with proper management. H'm, let me see—" he scratched his head. "The trap might break down—that ought to be good for a couple of sovereigns—I'll consult Grimes." In the midst of these meditations Sir Percy Palmerston came suddenly upon him. He took an envelope from his pocket. "Buttles," he said, "take this note to Mrs. Flatsaddle—and bring the answer to my room before dinner. Here's a sovereign for your trouble. Don't make any mistake now. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir." Mr. Buttles grinned

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politely, then, with conscious pride: "I never make mistakes in *such* matters, sir." As he spoke, he approached Sir Percy with an air of deep mystery. "Like as not, Sir Percy," he continued, "I can tell you somethink, sir, as will be of the greatest interest to you, sir, though I don't know as I should, sir—it might be thought presumptuous, sir."

Sir Percy looked surprised. "Of interest to me!" he exclaimed.

"Of the greatest interest, sir," Mr. Buttles replied mysteriously. "But in strictest confidence, sir, in strictest confidence. It would cost me my place, if—"

"Here's another sovereign," said Sir Percy curtly. "Now out with it."

Mr. Buttles retreated with a look of deep pain. He waved the sovereign away loftily. "Oh, sir, I couldn't take the risk for the like o' that, sir."

"Gad, you're a cool hand," said Palmerston. He took out his purse. "Here's two," and he extended the two sovereigns.

Mr. Buttles still retreated. The look of outraged virtue upon his face was worthy of Coquelin. "Oh, sir, it's much more important than *that*, sir. Nothing short of a ten-pound note, sir." He paused expectantly.

Palmerston glared at him. "You infernal robber," he exclaimed. "Well, here you are," he said, fishing a note out of his purse and replacing the sovereigns. "But if your news does not interest me I'll give you a jolly good hiding." He brandished his hunting-crop warningly.

Mr. Buttles again approached him. "Captain Flatsaddle and Miss Dorington are going to elope tonight on the eleven-forty," he said in a stage whisper.

The effect on Sir Percy was startling. He wilted visibly. "What!" he roared. "The devil you say!" He extracted his handkerchief from his cuff and mopped his forehead weakly. "Buttles," he groaned, "you've saved my life. Why, his wife and I had arranged to do the same thing and by the same train. Jove, that *would* have been

a rum go. Here; give me back that note. I'll write another, tomorrow perhaps."

"Better make it today, sir," said Mr. Buttles, sententiously. "The lady might like to score first."

"Score first!" said Palmerston. "What the devil do you mean by that?"

"Well, sir," said Mr. Buttles, and his manner was that of one to whom all domestic affairs were as an open book, "I've noticed, sir, that when a lady decides to leave her husband, sir, it seems somehow to annoy her to have her husband leave *her*, sir. They seems to take it unkind, sir. And sometimes, sir, they changes their minds, sir. It seems to knock the romance all out of the idee, sir."

Sir Percy nodded. "By Jove, you're right, I dare say. I'll write another note at once. Mum's the word, Buttles." He entered the castle rapidly as he observed Mrs. Tipton, Mrs. Flighter and Sallie approaching from the pergola.

"Buttles, we would like tea in the pergola," said Mrs. Tipton.

Mr. Buttles was all activity. "Yes, madam. You prefer the Ceylon, madam?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Tipton. "And you, Mrs. Flighter?"

"Oh, by all means," Mrs. Flighter responded. "I gladly accept your judgment in such matters, Mrs. Tipton. Your late husband was in trade, was he not?"

"Only in a wholesale way, my dear Mrs. Flighter. And Mr. Flighter, may I ask—"

"Oh, entirely wholesale, I assure you," Mrs. Flighter hastened to reply. "Canned goods."

"What!" cried Mrs. Tipton. "'Flighter's Ready Made Relishes'! Not really?"

"Exactly, Mrs. Tipton. And you?"

"Tipton's Tarts."

"How delightful!"

The two ladies smiled at each other in an ecstasy of mutual dislike. "Here comes Mr. Bagshot," said Sallie. Mr. Bagshot, as he approached, observed

the tea tray with which Polly at that moment entered.

"Ah, tea—good, good!" said Bagshot as the party strolled toward the pergola. "The air is a bit brisk."

"Is Mr. Flighter coming down soon?" inquired Mrs. Tipton.

"Yes, indeed; I expect him at any moment. The dear Earl insisted on his coming." Mrs. Flighter appeared greatly pleased with herself. "They met at Ascot, you know."

"Well, upon my word, madam," ventured Mr. Bagshot, "if your husband sees no more of the 'dear Earl' than the rest of us do, he may wonder if it wasn't someone else he met, after all."

The party had by this time gathered about the rustic tea-table under the shade of the pergola. "Why, he seems to be about a good deal," said Sallie.

Mrs. Tipton looked at her through her lorgnon. "Quite so, my dear," she exclaimed; "but the question is, *what* is he about and *whom*?"

Mr. Bagshot stepped into the breach.

"'Pon my soul," he said, "I don't know what has come over Arthur. He doesn't seem himself at all. Why, I've only seen him twice in the past four days. He seems to avoid me. Haven't you noticed it, madam?" He appealed to Mrs. Flighter.

"He does seem a trifle queer," replied that lady.

Mrs. Tipton glanced up from her cup. "Decidedly so, I think. He must be in love. What do you think, my dear?" she purred to Sallie.

Sallie looked slightly ill at ease. "Well, Mrs. Tipton," she replied, "you see I haven't known him very long, and then, I don't know much about earls anyway. Perhaps he is in love."

Mrs. Flighter rushed to her rescue. "Being in love is not confined to the Earl, Mrs. Tipton. It seems to be quite common here." Her tone implied much.

Mr. Bagshot, looking uncomfortable, rose. "I think I'll walk to the lodge," he suggested. "Won't you join me, Mrs. Tipton?"

"With pleasure, Mr. Bagshot," said that lady, rising. "Allow me to congratulate you, Miss Flighter," she said, with cutting sarcasm, "upon your lack of knowledge of earls."

Sallie was quite equal to the occasion. "Thank you, Mrs. Tipton," she rejoined with a charming smile. "I'm sure you are awfully qualified to do so." And as Mrs. Tipton swept out with Mr. Bagshot, she murmured to herself, "Little cat!"

Sallie looked solemnly at her mother. "Mother," she said, "there is something queer about Arthur—about the Earl, I mean. Why he told me only this morning that he had never met father."

"Oh, well, dearie, perhaps he is a bit flighty. You can't expect everything, you know. Think of the title."

"Yes, I know. That's just what everyone will say—'she married him for his title.' But it isn't true, mother. I like him for himself."

"Well, child, if you do, so much the better. He seems a nice young man—though not very talkative, I'll admit."

"That's another queer thing, mother. Do you know, he almost has nothing to say to the others—doesn't go about with them at all, and yet he talks to me—well—just all the time. I think I see him coming now."

Mrs. Flighter rose hastily. "Then I'd better go at once. I want to give you every chance, my dear," she said, as she left the pergola.

Hemingway rushed in as she left and beamed upon Sallie fatuously. "I've been looking for you everywhere, Miss Sallie," he exclaimed, as he took a seat beside her. "I've so much to tell you."

Sallie appeared noncommittally encouraging. "That's nice," she said. "What is it?"

"Well—er—you see," began Hemingway, as though not quite sure how to begin, "I want to tell you that I'm not just what you think I am."

"And what do I think you are?" asked Sallie mischievously.

Hemingway seemed a bit nonplussed. "Oh, well—hang it all, you see, I don't think much of titles, and ancestors,

and all that sort of thing. I believe in a man's being something himself."

"What, for instance?" inquired Sallie sweetly.

"Oh, well, something that really amounts to something. I want to know how you feel about it. Now about one's being an earl, for instance—what does it amount to?"

Sallie looked doubtful. "Why," she said, with a delightful smile, "earls are great, I think. They have castles and coronets and—and countesses, don't they—and lots of nice things?"

"Idle nonsense. Rot, all of it," asserted Hemingway positively. "Nothing but names. What is it for a man to call himself an earl? Suppose—just suppose, you know, that you should fall in love with a—well—with a chauffeur, for instance."

"Why, that would be simply great," laughed Sallie. "He'd take me out in the motor every day."

Hemingway seemed disappointed. "I wish you'd be serious," he said. "Now suppose you *did* meet a chauffeur or an artist or an author, or something like that, and he was really a man, straight through. Wouldn't you think more of him than of some fellow whose only claim to respect was a title, a silly, empty title that he'd come into just because his cousin happened to eat too much *pâté de foie gras*?"

Sallie refused to take the matter seriously. "Of course I should," she exclaimed gaily. "I just love chauffeurs. They take such dandy risks. It's like riding to hounds, only worse. Don't you think so?" She beamed upon him sweetly.

A look of disappointment, almost of annoyance, came over Hemingway's face. "Really, Miss Sallie," he said, "I'm not speaking of chauffeurs, you know."

Sallie looked up from the gravel walk, which she had been prodding viciously with her parasol. What was he trying to get at? she wondered. She had expected a proposal, and was a bit disappointed.

"Oh, aren't you?" she asked. "I thought you were. You can't tell

about people, you know. Things are so different in our country. I knew a girl in Chicago once who married a grocer. Her friends all said she was a fool, but I guess she knew what she was about, after all, for he's the president of the Sausage Trust now, and worth a couple of millions. You can't always tell."

Her belated interest in the subject seemed to revive Hemingway's drooping enthusiasm. He loved to talk—especially about his own pet theories.

"Yes, yes," he replied hastily. "But outside of money, or title, wouldn't you rather have love from a real, strong man that you could respect and admire, even if you had to live in a cave with him, than have the greatest title in the world?"

Sallie was becoming just a trifle bored. She glanced through the end of the pergola at the great gray walls of the Towers, and somehow this talk of caves failed to interest her. Sallie was nothing, if not practical. "Why not have both?" she said. "Caves are such damp, smelly places."

"But which would you choose, if it had to be one or the other?" persisted Hemingway, holding on to his subject like a puppy to a root.

Sallie rose and looked at him. "I should choose the man I loved, of course." She was tired of the subject, anyway. "Suppose we go into the billiard room," she suggested.

Hemingway faced her. "Whoever he might be?" he demanded.

"Of course," said Sallie, looking fondly at him.

Hemingway grasped her hand. "And you really wouldn't care whether he had a title or not?"

"Of course not," said Sallie, in some surprise. "But why talk about it? I shouldn't *mind* his having one, you know. It would be the same if he had red hair. He couldn't help it, could he?"

Hemingway's face was joyous. "Then, Miss Flighter—Sallie, listen to me," he exclaimed. "I am—"

Just what Hemingway intended to say, Sallie never knew. A cough, a discreet cough, but still a penetrating one,

caused them both to turn suddenly. There stood Mr. Buttles, the personification of regret. "I beg your pardon, me Lord, most humbly, me Lord—but"—he again coughed.

"What is it?" demanded Hemingway fiercely.

Mr. Buttles glanced pointedly at Sallie. "Me Lord, I have most serious and important news for your Lordship of a strictly private nature."

"Then I must be going," said Sallie.

"No, no, it can wait." Hemingway was angry, decidedly angry.

"Alas, me Lord, I fear it cannot," said Buttles in an abysmal voice.

"Never mind," said Sallie. "I'll just run in and see mother for a while. I'll be back again presently."

The scowl that Hemingway bestowed upon the devoted and bald head of Mr. Buttles was not good to see. "What the devil do you mean by coming in here and speaking to me when I am with Miss Flighter? Don't you know your place?"

A curious smile flitted for a moment toward Mr. Buttles's left ear. That side of his face was, as it happened, turned away from the irate Hemingway.

"Ah, me Lord," he said in his most ingratiating manner, "I fear I have made a mistake. And yet, me Lord, it was you, yourself, only yesterday, as told me, me Lord, in that little talk on Socialism we had, me Lord, that in the Great Brotherhood of Man—I think them was your werry words, me Lord—in the Great Brotherhood of Man, a servant is just as good as his master, me Lord, and generally summat better."

"Ahem!" Hemingway recovered himself as gracefully as possible.

"Quite so—I was wrong. Buttles, I beg your pardon. I was quite wrong."

"Just so, me Lord; just so. And after all, me Lord, you are only Huggins, the chauffeur, me Lord, and I"—Mr. Buttles straightened himself up pompously—"I am Mr. Buttles."

"Confound your impudence!" growled Hemingway. "What do you want?"

"Ah, me Lord, think of the grave injury you were about to do me."

"What do you mean?" asked Hemingway.

Mr. Buttles approached him. There was an angry glint in his eye. "I mean, Huggins," he growled, "that you must *not* tell Miss Flighter that you are not the Earl. It's simply out of the question—quite impossible—quite. You owe it to me, sir, to—"

"I owe you nothing," cried Hemingway.

"Ten pound, to start with," said Mr. Buttles significantly.

"I'll give you a cheque for it—"

"No use, sir; I couldn't use it, sir. Just think what I have been doing for you today, sir, and you so ungrateful. There's the newspaper man—I've had a most trying time with him, sir, most trying. He insists on publishing the news of your engagement to Miss Flighter in his paper, sir—but I've held him off, don't forget that, sir—but it was hard work, sir—hard work." Mr. Buttles showed in every line of his figure how near he was to a state of absolute collapse. He heightened the impression by mopping his forehead vigorously with a large silk handkerchief. "Hard work, indeed, sir," he groaned.

Hemingway was nearly speechless with rage. "Do you mean to threaten me?" he roared.

"Oh, me Lord—sir—why will you get these ideas? I wouldn't think of such a thing—never, sir, not for a moment, sir. But if such a report was published you might find difficulty in explaining the matter to Miss Flighter, sir, and she might have difficulty in explaining it to her friends, sir—and altogether, sir, I think as how it would be werry unpleasant all round. I'm sure as how you had much better keep quiet for the present, sir, and not spoil everythink."

"You—you—monster—" gasped Hemingway, and strode away speechless with anger. Mr. Buttles followed him, still mopping his forehead. After all, he mused, things did seem to be getting a bit mixed. Even as he reached the terrace he was confronted by new disaster. Captain

Flatsaddle was walking up and down in a tearing rage. "You infernal ass!" he roared, as Mr. Buttles appeared. "Did you tell my wife that I intended bolting with Miss Dorrington this evening?"

Mr. Buttles, with chattering teeth, assured him that he had not. The Captain was not a man to be trifled with. Things were certainly getting a bit mixed.

"Well, she's actin' very strangely. I go up to pack some things. There she is with her maid, packin' hers. I want the railway guide—find she has it, lookin' up trains. She said I was an accommodating brute. What does she mean by that? I believe you've told her, you scoundrel," he poked at Mr. Buttles with his cane, using it as a foil. Mr. Buttles skipped nimbly from side to side.

"On my honor, sir; I assure you, sir," he repeated pathetically. "Maybe she's intendin' somethin' of the sort herself, sir."

"What! With that silly ass, Palmerston? I'd thrash him first—I wouldn't allow it—"

"Oh, sir," gasped Mr. Buttles faintly, "I didn't say that, sir—I didn't say anything about Sir Percy, sir. I don't know what I'm sayin', sir. This has been a terrible day, a terrible day." His wilted collar, his face shorn of its perpetual smile—one could feel generations of past butlers looking down upon him in silent condemnation. To add to his confusion, Palmerston at that moment appeared through the gateway in the hedge. Captain Flatsaddle fixed a furious eye upon him.

"Here, you!" he shouted. "I understand you are planning to bolt with my wife. Well, I won't have it, do you hear?"

"Well, why not?" Palmerston was irritatingly calm. "You're planning a similar trip yourself, aren't you?"

Flatsaddle turned to the wretched figure before him. "You scoundrel!" he roared, raising his cane. Mr. Buttles retreated.

"I never said a word, sir, not to nobody, sir—indeed, sir." He escaped

backward in a pitiable state. Flatsaddle turned to Sir Percy. "I'm not running away with *your* wife, am I? It's not right—do you hear?"

"No, by Jove, I'd like to see you," said Sir Percy.

"You should, eh?" angrily returned the irate Captain. "Well, by gad, if you had one, I would. You can elope with whom you damned please, but not with my wife—that's final. Why don't you pick out some woman who hasn't a husband?"

"Husband!" exclaimed Palmerston. "You call yourself a husband? Much right you have to preach!"

"If you try it I'll stop you." The Captain was extremely angry. "What train are you going on?"

"Well, I like your nerve, I'll be bound. What train are *you* going on?"

A sudden thought struck the Captain. "Suppose it should be the same train!" he cried. "How ghastly!" Then observing Sallie approaching, "Let's go inside and talk it over. Someone's coming," he said.

"All right, if you like," replied Sir Percy, starting for the entrance.

"Why, Captain—Sir Percy," called Sallie to them, as she came through the hedge. "Don't hurry away—"

"Er—ah—well—you see," began Palmerston.

"Business?" asked Sallie, laughing.

"Important business, Miss Flighter," said the Captain. "Family affairs—important family affairs to talk over—you'll pardon us, I know. Come on, Pammy." They hurried out.

"Oh, certainly," called Sallie after them. "What a funny pair they are!" she thought, as she looked expectantly toward the pergola.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Heiress Listens to a Strange Proposal

MISS SALLIE FLIGHTER was a practical girl, like her practical father, but she was a sincere and honest girl, nevertheless, and she had come to care very deeply for Hemingway. As a

matter of fact, she rather agreed with his democratic ideas—Hemingway appealed to her because of his interesting personality—she did care for him for himself—but for all that, she was glad that the man of her choice occupied the position he did. She had not heard much about the Earl's dissipations. Her mother knew of these things—they were matters of common knowledge for that matter, and Mrs. Tipton had not failed to dilate upon them on all possible occasions. But Mrs. Flighter felt that the Flighter millions would soon repair the somewhat broken condition of the Everdun fortunes, while as for the wild oats—well—she felt that it was better to have them sown and over with—beforehand. So she had written to Mr. Flighter, occupied with some matters of business in London, that Sallie and the Earl were likely to make a match, and urged upon him the desirability of his immediate appearance on the scene.

Mr. Flighter on receiving this letter swore deeply, as was his wont when disturbed in mind, packed his grip and took the first train down. Meanwhile, Sallie, sitting near the sun-dial on the terrace, mused upon the time when she should be the Countess of Everdun and watched for Hemingway out of the corner of her eye. Suddenly she saw him approaching from the entrance. He appeared hurried.

"I couldn't find you inside anywhere," he exclaimed. "Where have you been hiding yourself?"

"Oh, I went out the main entrance and came around. I thought you had deserted me."

Hemingway looked at her tenderly. She was indeed a charming picture, as was to be expected. Miss Flighter had not spent four weeks and as many thousands in Paris for nothing.

"I have so much to say to you," he exclaimed. "So much that I must tell you—Sallie."

Sallie laughed a bit nervously. "About chauffeurs?" she asked.

"No, about myself." Hemingway approached her and stood leaning against the sun-dial.

"Then I know I shall be interested," said Sallie, looking up at him sweetly.

"Yes, I'm sure you will be," Hemingway burst out. "I'm sure you will be. Listen to me—I am a newspaper correspondent, a writer, the author of two plays and a novel—though it isn't published yet," he added rather lamely. "I am a man who has been through two wars, and who has suffered over half the world. But no matter what I am, or what I have done—I still have one thing to my credit. I am not an earl and never was."

"Is this a joke?" inquired Sallie anxiously.

"Not a bit of it. It's all true, thank the Lord—every word of it. I felt that I must tell you, so that you wouldn't have *that* against me. Now I can come to you with that load off my shoulders and tell you that I love you—that I love you madly, with all the love of my soul, and that I want you to be my wife. I wanted you first to realize that I am no mere creature of circumstance—of birth—born with a silver spoon in my mouth, but a man who has fought his way in the world proudly against all obstacles—who has done something—who has won. I knew the moment I saw you that to you an empty title could have no meaning—no value—that your love would be given to a man—not to a silly name."

During this recital poor Sallie, in confused amazement, had drawn slightly away from him. He failed to notice it, however, so interested was he in his theme.

"As Shaw says," he continued, warming to his subject, "titles distinguish the mediocre, embarrass the superior, and are disgraced by the inferior. I don't want to be distinguished that way. In the Great Brotherhood of Man—"

But Sallie could stand no more. Tears of disappointment stood in her eyes. "Are you making a speech, may I ask?" she inquired coldly.

Hemingway came suddenly to earth. "Good heavens, no!" he gasped. "I love you—I want to marry you—"

"And you really are not the Earl of Everdun?"

"Indeed I'm not," he exclaimed. "You'll believe me, won't you? I wouldn't be for anything—"

Sallie looked at him with wide-open eyes. "What a narrow escapel!" she gasped, sinking into a rustic seat.

Hemingway, not understanding her at all, looked at her in wonder. Thus they both failed to observe the swift approach of the ever vigilant Mr. Buttles. "Ah, me Lord," he cried hastily, fearfully, as one who thinks he may perhaps have arrived too late, "I have a most important telegram—"

Hemingway looked at him coldly. "Don't use that absurd title any more," he said slowly. "I've told Miss Flighter everything."

There are some natures which in such crises as this sink beneath the crushing weight of the inevitable. Needless to say, this was not the case with Mr. Buttles. For one brief, epoch-making moment he gazed open-mouthed at the two before him—then his imperturbable manner, his genial smile, returned like the sunshine after a passing bit of cloud. Mr. Buttles had pulled himself together.

"Ah, me Lord, me Lord," he wailed, with a look of tender concern. "Too bad—too bad—another of them unfortunate spells. I shall send for Doctor Watkins at once, me Lord, at once. And you must keep quiet, me Lord—werry quiet—better go upstairs and lie down till dinner, me Lord—I'm sure you'll be better by night—much better, me Lord." Then turning to Sallie: "You mustn't mind his Lordship, Miss Flighter. It's just one of his little attacks. The doctor says it comes from the—the—liver—miss—you'll pardon me, miss—he has wisions, miss—imagines he's a Socialist—or something of the sort, miss—but Lord bless you, miss, he don't mean no harm, he don't—just a pleasantry, miss—just a pleasantry."

Hemingway recovered himself about this time and realized what Mr. Buttles was up to.

"Stop it—stop it, I say!" he

yelled. "Don't try any game like that!"

Mr. Buttles looked at him with an inscrutable smile. Slowly he took from his pocket a pink slip—a telegram. "Gwendolyn," he repeated softly, untidiously—"Gwendolyn."

"What!" cried Hemingway starting back in horror. "You wouldn't dare—"

"Gwendolyn?" asked Sallie, in amazement. "Gwendolyn?"

"Yes, miss; Gwendolyn, miss. Most curious, miss—that word seems always to quiet him, miss. Doctor Watkins says as how he can't account for it, miss—most curious case—most remarkable. Just repeat that word, miss, and he's as right as a trivet—aren't you, me Lord?" He smiled at Hemingway knowingly.

Hemingway passed his hand over his forehead—he seemed dazed.

"Sallie—Miss Flighter," he cried. "I'm not mad—but, really, if this thing keeps up, I shall soon be. Stand by me, won't you?" He held out his hand to her. Mr. Buttles withdrew discreetly to one side.

"Of course, Arthur dear," cried Sallie with enthusiasm. "I'm so sorry to have doubted you. I'll stand by you always."

At this moment there were heard sounds of someone running rapidly along the gravel walk back of the hedge. Hemingway and Sallie both turned to look. A figure in a black frock coat, wearing a silk hat slightly on one side, carrying a grip, and waving an umbrella wildly in the air—a figure red of face, and covered with dust—burst through the gateway in the hedge.

"Stop it! Hey there, stop it, I say!" he called, brandishing his umbrella fiercely.

"Good heavens!" gasped Sallie. "It's papa."

Hemingway, not hearing her, gazed at the approaching vision in alarm. "What the devil do you want?" he cried.

Mr. Flighter lost no time. "Stop it, I say!" he exclaimed excitedly. Then to Hemingway: "I've heard all about you, Everdun—all about Monte Carlo—your gambling—your racing—your es—"

tate wrecked—the whole story—and I've also heard that you are trying to marry my daughter. I've come down here to tell you that I won't stand for any such proposition for a son-in-law—understand! These women folks are all crazy after titles, but as for me, give me a man that amounts to something—that's made money, or tried to, honestly—that's the sort of man for me—the kind that strikes out hard, and keeps on striking out hard till he hits the bull's eye. No wine-suppering, card-playing earls in mine—understand!"

To say that this outburst surprised Hemingway would be putting it mildly. His face, which at first expressed only bewilderment, gradually began to light up, and as Mr. Flighter concluded his remarks he rushed at him with a joyous smile. "My dear Mr. Flighter," he began, extending his hand.

But Mr. Flighter was not to be balked in any such way as this. He waved aside the proffered hand with a sweep of his umbrella. "Wait—don't interrupt me," he cried. "I don't like to say these things to you, Everdun, but I won't have any such son-in-law for mine, and if Sallie marries you she doesn't get a cent—that's flat—not a cent. I'm not selling Flighter's canned goods and ready made relishes to pay anybody's gambling debts—not by a jug full."

Again Hemingway attempted to approach him with extended hand.

"By George, sir," he exclaimed, "let me shake your hand. You are the sort of man I admire!"

Mr. Flighter recoiled in amazement and glared at Hemingway as though he had taken leave of his senses. "Don't you understand, sir," he demanded, in ominous tones, "that I am referring to you?" He observed Hemingway's movements suspiciously. But the latter refused to be turned aside. He continued to advance toward the irate Mr. Flighter with an expression of delight upon his countenance.

"Yes, yes, that's all right—you don't understand—but your sentiments are sublime, sir, simply sublime—just

what I've said all my life, sir—magnificent, simply magnificent. I couldn't have expressed them better myself."

Mr. Flighter took another step backward and glanced about him anxiously. Evidently he found this line of attack very disconcerting. "Either you are mad," he cried, "or you are trying a very ill-timed joke. Have I made any mistake—don't you want to marry my daughter?"

"Yes—yes—of course I do," exclaimed Hemingway, "but—"

Mr. Flighter cut him short. "Well, you won't, do you understand, you young rascal? That settles it—I'm not sure I'd let her marry an earl, anyway, just on general principles—but as for you, never, sir, never—do you understand? Never!" Mr. Flighter fairly snorted with indignation.

"But let me explain," began Hemingway.

"Not a word, sir, not a word. You are trying to make me ridiculous." He turned to Sallie, who had been watching the scene with ill-concealed anxiety. "Sallie, where's your mother—I must see her at once."

"I think she's in her room, father," she began, "but—"

"All right, take me there at once," said her father, moving toward the entrance.

Hemingway tried to intercept him. "Stop, I beg of you," he cried; "listen to me, sir—I am not what you think I am, indeed, sir—if you will give me a moment—this man Buttles—" he pointed an accusing finger at the object of his wrath.

Mr. Buttles was ready. Nothing daunted, he jumped into the fray. "Yes, me Lord—coming, me Lord. Shall I send for the doctor, me Lord?" He winked at Mr. Flighter with disgusting effrontery. "You see, sir," he began, "his Lordship's a trifle queer at times—a trifle—well—I should call it balmy, sir." He tapped his forehead knowingly.

Hemingway rushed at him. "You impudent rascal!" he roared. "I'll teach you—"

Mr. Buttles retreated a step. "Shall

we have in the doctor, me Lord—or Gwendolyn, me Lord?"

Hemingway paused, and as he did so Mr. Flighter, followed hastily by Sallie, brushed past him. "Don't attempt your jokes with me, Everdun," he snorted—"don't attempt them with me. I know very well who you are and what you are. Let me pass, sir!" They hastened into the castle.

Hemingway gazed after them in utter disgust. "What an absolute ass I am!" he muttered.

"Quite so, me Lord," said Mr. Buttles, as he followed the Flighters into the castle.

CHAPTER FIVE

Lord Everdun Appears upon the Scene

SALLIE and her father, accompanied by Mr. Buttles, made their way to the great hall. Here Sallie left them to find her mother and inform her of Mr. Flighter's arrival. Mr. Buttles remained with Mr. Flighter in the hall. He attempted by various indirect methods to obtain possession of Mr. Flighter's bag and umbrella, but the old gentleman held on to them determinedly, refused all suggestions of tea or whisky and soda, and insisted upon being told when the next train left for London.

"Why, sir, you're not thinking of going away, are you, sir? I should be sorry to think *that*, sir," Mr. Buttles cooed in his most persuasive voice; "most sorry and grieved, I'm sure, sir. Regard the place as a hotel, sir."

"I tell you I want to go away," replied Mr. Flighter peevishly. "Your master's as mad as a hatter. Where's Mrs. Flighter? I must see her at once."

"Here I am, Ulysses," cried Mrs. Flighter, as she descended the stairway. "I'm so glad to see you. Have you seen Arthur—the Earl, I mean? You'd better come right on up and dress for dinner. Buttles," she turned to the waiting butler, "have Mr. Flighter's things sent up at once."

"Why, madam—beggin' your pardon

for the liberty, madam—Mr. Flighter tells me he's thinkin' of goin' away, madam, but I'm sure as how you, madam, can persuade him to stay. We'll do our best to make you quite comfortable, madam." Again Mr. Buttles made a dive for the bag.

"Nonsense, Ulysses," Mrs. Flighter looked at him in wonder. "Why, you haven't seen the Earl yet."

"Yes I have," growled Mr. Flighter, "and it was quite enough for me."

"Why, Ulysses, you astonish me. I think he's charming."

"Charming!" Mr. Flighter's disgust was unfathomable. "Good Lord, Maria," he exclaimed, "you are as foolish about a title as all the rest."

"There, there, Ulysses," said Mrs. Flighter soothingly, "you must see him again—have a long talk with him—you'll change your mind, I'm sure." She turned to Mr. Buttles. "Where is his Lordship now, Buttles?" she inquired.

"I think he's on the terrace, madam."

"Very well—I'll go to him now. Have Mr. Flighter shown to his rooms." She hurried out in a somewhat disturbed state of mind. Hardly had the portières closed behind her when Mr. Flighter beckoned to Mr. Buttles. "Here, you," he said, "get me away from this place quick—tonight—persuade Mrs. Flighter to go—arrange it somehow—I don't want to spend a week here—I won't. Fix it up some way—any way—I'm sure you can do it—here's something for your trouble." He handed Mr. Buttles a handful of sovereigns. "I'll double it if you make good—see?"

Mr. Buttles bowed his second-best bow—the one next to that reserved for royalty. Perhaps it was the weight of the gold in his hand that caused him to bend so low. "I'll do my best, sir; you can depend upon *that*, sir—my werry best."

"All right," said Mr. Flighter. "Now where's that room? I suppose I'm in for dinner, anyway."

Calling one of the under servants, Mr. Buttles dispatched Mr. Flighter to his rooms—just as Mrs. Flighter re-

turned from an unsuccessful search for the Earl.

"I couldn't find him anywhere, Buttles," she exclaimed. "Where is Mr. Flighter?"

"He's gone to his rooms, madam."

"Good. I was afraid he might insist on returning to London at once. You must give me your help, Buttles. Persuade him to stay—keep him here at any cost—under no circumstances let him go. Here's twenty pounds." She took the notes from her purse and pressed them into his hand. "And you shall have as much more if you keep him here the rest of the week."

Again Mr. Buttles executed his second-best bow. "I'll do my werry best, madam; you can depend upon *that*!" he murmured, as Mrs. Flighter hastened to join her husband.

Casting his eyes about, Mr. Buttles observed that he was quite alone. "Werry satisfactory, werry satisfactory indeed," he remarked. "There's something about these American ladies and gents as strikes me about right—Lord bless yer!—they're large-minded—that's what they are—large-minded. At this rate, 'Buttles, Limited,' will shortly be declaring a dividend." It was high time, too. Only that morning Grimes, the head stableman, had struck.

"Look 'ere, Mr. Buttles," he grumbled, "'ow can yer h'expect me to keep h'up the stables h'on nothin'? S'elp me, I might be feedin' the 'osses on turnips an' carrots, for all o' you. I needs money." The second men were complaining. M. Cordonbleu, the chef, had exploded characteristically:

"Eet ees impossib'—yes—yes! Name of a pig! I need everyting—everyting! I 'ave no zis—I 'ave no zat—what can ze artiste accomplish wizout ze tools? *Sacré!*"

Mr. Buttles had quieted them with a few well-chosen remarks.

"Now, now, my dear friends and fellow-shareholders," he said, "why all this excitement? Why, I arks you? Let us do everything in proper form. Remember, please, we are a corporation." Mr. Buttles folded his

hands across his own ample proportions. "A dignified, healthy, growing corporation. Let us proceed in order. We will have a meeting of shareholders to-night after dinner and discuss the matter of dividends. Each of you bring a list of what you need—we will provide for everything needful—leave it to me, my friends—leave everything to me."

He had also a short conversation with Grimes, whom he took aside afterward. "H'm—Grimes—did I understand—am I correkly informed that Farmer Jenkinson, of Hillcrest, desires to purchase—to purchase some cows, Grimes—to be quite plain—that pair of Alderney heifers, Grimes—and a pair of his Lordship's Holsteins, Grimes?"

"So I 'ears," Grimes had rejoined.

"Then let him have them, Grimes. Send him to me—send him to me—his Lordship's own orders, Grimes—send him to me." From all of which it seems likely that the treasury of "Buttles, Limited," was doing nicely. So lost was Mr. Buttles in a contemplation of these events—so deeply did his thoughts engross him, that he hardly heard Hemingway as the latter hurriedly descended the great stairway and entered the hall. Hemingway carried a Gladstone bag and had a light coat upon his arm. He seemed to be in a hurry and almost ran into Mr. Buttles as he made for the door. The butler turned. "Good evenin', me Lord—glad to see your Lordship looking so well." Then he caught sight of the Gladstone bag. "And *what*, may I arsk, is your Lordship proposin' to do with that Gladstone?"

Hemingway turned on him like a flash. "I'll tell you, you unscrupulous blackguard—just exactly what I'm going to do with it. I'm going to London with it, that's what."

Mr. Buttles almost fell over backward. For the second time that day, his presence of mind almost forsook him. "Impossible, impossible, me Lord," he gasped.

"Buttles," said Hemingway coolly, "your education has been sadly neg-

lected. Don't you know that to the human ego nothing is impossible?"

"Ah, me Lord, no doubt as how you are quite right—quite right—but don't, I beg of you, me Lord, go to any trouble to prove it to me. Just stay quietly here."

Hemingway started for the door. "No," he said; "my mind is quite made up—nothing shall stop me now."

At that moment the doorbell rang. Mr. Buttles hastened to open it. A robust female in a long, tan, silk coat and a beflowered hat rushed in hurriedly. She took one glance about the dim hall, caught sight of Hemingway, and hurled herself upon him with the enthusiasm of a football player making a running tackle. "Archie, you dear, sweet, precious old darling!" she cried. "I'm so glad I've found you. I had to walk all the way from the station."

"Good Lord, who are you?" stammered Hemingway, vainly trying to extricate himself.

"I think it must be Gwendolyn, me Lord," said Mr. Buttles with a grin. The fates certainly seemed to be with him.

"Well, I should say so," said Gwendolyn, looking up. "Who else?" She made another reach for Hemingway's neck, but he managed to evade her. "And why didn't you send me a cheque as you promised, Archie, dear?"

"See here, young woman," he gasped, "you mustn't do that, you know—go away."

Gwendolyn looked at him with narrowing eyelids. "Why, Archie, how can you speak to your little girl in such a rough way?" She dabbed her eyes with a lace handkerchief and sniffed a bit. "Don't you love your little pet any more?"

Hemingway was a picture of dismay. He turned to Mr. Buttles. "Buttles," he groaned, "for God's sake, can't you get rid of this woman?"

A gleam of diabolical cunning lit up the eyes of Mr. Buttles. "Why not take her to London with you, me Lord," he suggested cheerfully.

Gwendolyn precipitated herself into Hemingway's arms again. "Oh,

Archie, Archie," she cried joyfully, "are you really, really going up to town with me? Won't that be just too ripping for words, Archie?" She punctuated her remarks with violent little hugs.

Hemingway carefully removed her arms from about his neck and retreated a few paces. "No, no," he shouted, "it's all a mistake. I haven't the least idea of going to London—not the least, I assure you. How much money do you want?"

The mention of money seemed to have a stimulating effect upon Gwendolyn's nerves. "Oh, I might get along with a couple of hundred, you know, temporarily; that is—you see, there's the rent and the other bills."

"Lost! Lost!" groaned Hemingway.

Mr. Buttles, as usual, stepped into the breach. "Give me the bills, young woman. I will attend to this matter, but"—he turned to Hemingway—"your word, me Lord, that you will stay here—it wouldn't do at all for you to go to London, now, would it, me Lord?"

Hemingway glared at him in disgust. He looked about anxiously, fearful that Sallie might at any moment come suddenly upon them. "Get this woman out of the house," he snapped, "and I'll do anything you ask."

Gwendolyn pouted. "Don't speak so rudely, Archie," she remarked. "I don't like it a bit."

And just then Sallie, as luck would have it, strolled into the hall. She took in the scene at a glance. "Oh, I beg your pardon," she remarked. "I didn't know—"

Hemingway's face turned crimson. "Oh—er—exactly," he stammered out; "yes—of course—allow me—er—allow me—Miss Flighter—to present Miss—er—Miss—Miss—"

"Hemingway is the lady's name, me Lord," suggested Mr. Buttles. "I observe it painted there upon her luggage." He pointed solemnly at Hemingway's Gladstone.

"Oh—I say now," began Gwendolyn, "what sort of a plant—?"

Mr. Buttles quickly silenced her.

"Keep still, can't you?" he muttered under his breath; "leave this to me."

"What name did you say?" demanded the astounded Hemingway.

"Hemingway, me Lord," Mr. Buttles's voice was as smooth as silk; "Mrs. Hemingway—wife of a newspaper gent in reduced circumstances, me Lord, come down to be the new governess."

Sallie stared. "Governess?" she inquired coldly. "For what?"

Mr. Buttles hastened to correct himself. "Governess did I say, miss? How careless of me, miss—organist, I should have said, miss—organist for St. Thomas's, in the village, miss."

Gwendolyn began to grasp the situation. "The two hundred now, or I stick," she informed Mr. Buttles in a stage whisper.

"Impossible," he replied.

"Am I interrupting?" inquired Sallie sweetly.

"Certainly not," replied Hemingway, who had partially recovered himself. "I beg that you will remain."

Gwendolyn came over and sat on the edge of the table. The theatrical aspect of the situation was beginning to appeal to her. "I am sure, my Lord," she began, "that I could not think of undertaking the—ahem—arduous duties of the position for less than two hundred pounds—in advance—and little enough, too—don't you think so, Miss Flighter?"

"Very little, I should say. Why don't you give it to her, Arthur?" remarked Sallie.

"Yes, Archie—dig." Gwendolyn smiled serenely upon him.

"Archie!—Dig!—" gasped Sallie in horror.

"Yes—yes—that's all right—I remember now. Her husband's an old friend of mine—very old friend. Go ahead, Buttles—make all the necessary arrangements—I agree to everything—everything."

Mr. Buttles touched her arm. "This way, ma'am," he said. "Everything will be all right; you have his Lordship's word for it."

Gwendolyn slid off the table. "Thanks, Archie, dear. Good-bye," she trilled. Then she picked up Heming-

way's Gladstone and started after Mr. Buttles.

"That Gladstone!" gasped Hemingway.

"Quite so, me Lord. Allow me, ma'am." Mr. Buttles took the bag from her and held open the door. "You'd best have some tea, ma'am," he suggested, as the door closed behind them.

"She seems to be a strange sort of person," remarked Sallie.

"Yes—she is, isn't she? Ha! Ha!" Hemingway rambled on. "I'll do what I can for her for her husband's sake. Poor Hemingway! Poor Ralph! Gone but not forgotten."

He sighed deeply.

"Oh, is she a widow?" Sallie looked at him curiously.

"Oh, no, I didn't mean that he is dead. Just gone to—to China—I believe—but never mind about him—there's something I want to ask you."

"Yes," said Sallie encouragingly.

"Tell me, did you mean all you said yesterday?"

"About what?"

"You said you wanted a man, not a title."

"But I told you, Arthur, that I would not object to both."

"But your father's ideas are splendid—don't you agree with him—don't you feel as he does?"

"Of course I do," Sallie began to breathe freely. "I want you to talk to him, to let him see that you are a man, a thinker, a worker, even if you have a title."

"But if I told you that I hadn't?" said Hemingway desperately.

Sallie looked at him with a grave and serious face. "There is one word, Arthur, that I feel I should say—one word that will make everything all right—shall I say it, dear?"

"Oh, if you only would," groaned Hemingway, grasping her hand.

"Gwendolyn," whispered Sallie softly.

Hemingway jumped back with a yell. "Where?" he cried, looking about.

"What do you mean?" asked Sallie in amazement.

"Sallie—Miss Flighter," gasped Hem-

ingway, leaning against the table for support and mopping his forehead feebly, "take me into the garden—I need air—this is too much for me."

"All right," said Sallie, "we'll take a turn about the grounds. You'll feel a lot better, I'm sure."

Meanwhile Mr. Flighter, having painfully inserted himself into his evening clothes and lit a strong black cigar, descended gloomily into the hall. "This place is a regular madhouse," he said as he picked up an afternoon paper from the table. "Bah!" he threw it down again in disgust. "There's nothing in these papers. I wish I was back in God's country again." As he spoke a motor car whizzed up to the entrance, and a moment later Lord Everdun, in a motoring coat and goggles, rushed into the hall and confronted the unsuspecting Mr. Flighter.

"Am I in time?" he shouted.

"In time for what?" Mr. Flighter eyed him coldly.

"That marriage—" began the Earl in evident excitement.

Mr. Flighter scowled at him. "Why do you keep running after me?" he asked. "I tell you my decision is final."

"Your decision! What the deuce are you talking about?" Lord Everdun was plainly taken aback.

"Everdun," said Mr. Flighter, "you shall *not* marry my daughter. I thought I had made that plain. So don't keep running after me like this—you annoy me."

Lord Everdun reeled against Ferguson in his surprise. "Marry your daughter—marry your daughter! Why, I don't want to marry your daughter, you lunatic. I've never even seen her."

"What!" Mr. Flighter let his cigar fall to the floor in bewilderment. "Never even *seen* her. Why, you impudent rascal—didn't I catch you making love to her in the garden less than an hour ago? What do you mean, sir?" He shook his finger at the Earl.

"Flighter, you're mad," cried the Earl.

"How dare you?" Mr. Flighter burst

out. "How dare you? Didn't I tell you I'd have no gambling, spendthrift son-in-law for mine, and didn't you tell me that my sentiments were sublime, simply sublime?"

"I said that—I!" Lord Everdun burst out laughing. "Why, my dear fellow, I haven't the least idea of marrying anyone—not the least." Suddenly he was seized with an idea. "It must have been Huggins—by Jove!"

"Well, I'm glad to hear it, for you can't marry my daughter—that's final."

"Thank heaven, I'm not too late," said the Earl, looking more cheerful. "I came all the way from Paris to prevent it."

This was too much for Mr. Flighter. He edged away and backed behind the table. "Paris!" he groaned weakly. "All the way from Paris! And my wife has been writing me about you every day this week. I see it all—you've lost your mind. Keep away from me, sir—keep away."

Lord Everdun again burst out laughing. "Never mind, Flighter," he exclaimed. "You'll understand it all later. You must excuse me, now. I've got to find Huggins. Ferguson, put up the car." He dashed hastily out.

Mr. Flighter sank into a chair. "Well, I'll be jiggered!" he exclaimed.

CHAPTER SIX

Lord Everdun and Hemingway Explain

SOME fifteen minutes later Mr. Flighter, who had strolled into the billiard room, was joined by his wife. She noted his gloomy countenance and preoccupied expression. "What's wrong with you, Ulysses?" she inquired. "Are you ill?"

"No, Maria, no, I'm all right—don't worry about me."

"Anythink I can get you, sir?" said Mr. Buttles, appearing at the door.

"Yes, some whisky," replied Flighter shortly.

"Yes, sir—I'll fetch it, sir. Don't

you feel well, sir—anythink wrong, sir?"

"Go away—go away," said Mr. Flighter irritably.

"Yes, sir—thank you, sir." Mr. Buttles discreetly retired. "He certainly do seem a bit queer. Wonder what's hit him?" he muttered.

"Ulysses!" said Mrs. Flighter in surprise. Mr. Flighter hardly ever indulged in whisky. "You *must* be ill, or you wouldn't ask for whisky. What is it? Have you seen the Earl?"

"Yes—I've seen him—oh, yes—I've seen him." Mr. Flighter's look was eloquent.

"And he asked your consent to marry Sallie?" inquired Mrs. Flighter eagerly.

Mr. Flighter emitted a snort of disgust. "He said he wouldn't marry her for anything."

"Ulysses! What do you mean? Why, he's been making the most desperate love to her for the past week—morning, noon and night. He was only waiting for your arrival to ask you—I'm positive of it." Mrs. Flighter's voice shook with excitement.

"Today he says he never saw her," answered Mr. Flighter wearily.

Mrs. Flighter looked at him in vague alarm. Evidently there was something wrong with him. "There—there now," she said soothingly, "don't worry about it—it's only a touch of the heat—you'll be all right again soon. Perhaps you had better lie down for a while."

"Maria, don't be a fool," returned her husband angrily. "That young rascal is as mad as a hatter, or else he's trying to play some ridiculous joke on me. I'm not sure just which."

"Well, Ulysses, I don't understand it. I'm not sure about you, not sure at all. You look very badly. Here's the whisky now, and after that you'd better come out and get some air."

Mr. Flighter poured out a stiff drink, gulped it down and replaced the glass upon the tray. "Buttles," he said sternly, "has the Earl been here all the past week?"

"Every day, sir—every day," re-

plied Mr. Buttles pleasantly. "I've seen him most frequent, sir."

"You told me, I believe, that there is something queer about him—is there anything the matter with his mind?"

"Well, sir, now that you speak of it, sir, his Lordship is a bit queer at times—hallucinations, sir—thinks as how he's someone else, sir. Remarkable case, sir—most remarkable. But remember, sir, in future, sir, if he begins it, sir, just look him straight in the eye and say 'Gwendolyn.'"

"Gwendolyn!" repeated Mr. Flighter in amazement.

"Yes, sir—just so, sir—it's certain to quiet him at once, sir."

Mr. Flighter rose in wrath. "Maria," he exclaimed, "everybody seems to be more or less mad here. 'Gwendolyn!' What idiotic nonsense! I've got enough—the next train for mine! Come and pack your things." He rushed out, followed by Mrs. Flighter, who tearfully besought him not to do anything rash.

"Curious old party—most curious. Don't seem to like it here at all. Strange—strange," said Mr. Buttles, as he sauntered out after them.

The billiard room at the Towers opened out onto the terrace and the rose garden. Hardly had Mr. Buttles left the room when Sallie and Hemingway came in from their walk about the grounds. Hemingway had been monosyllabically silent. As a matter of fact, he didn't know just what to say. Sallie, not understanding his mood, had been equally silent, after the first few moments. As they entered the billiard room she said, "I hope you feel better."

"Yes, I suppose I do," he replied.

"What is the matter with you, Arthur? Really, I don't understand you at all."

Hemingway laughed bitterly. "I shouldn't think you would," he replied. "I don't understand myself, exactly. Really, Miss Flighter, do you know, I'm not exactly sure, just at present, who on earth I am."

"Never mind, you poor boy, you

need a rest—and someone to take care of you.” She took his hand and patted it in a motherly sort of a way.

Her tone thrilled him. “Miss Flighter—Sallie—listen to me,” he burst out. “This situation is too much for me, but here I stand before you, just a man who loves you deeply and truly, and for yourself alone. Of one thing you may be quite sure—I am not mad. You’ll understand it all some day. If you really love me, promise to marry me, whoever I may be—just for myself—just for what I am—and because I love you.” He took her two hands in his—his face close to hers. “Is there any chance?” he asked. “Indeed I *do* love you.”

Sallie blushed a rosy red. “And you wouldn’t make me live in a cave?” she asked, with a bit of a laugh.

Hemingway opened his arms to her. “Sallie, you dear, you dear!” he cried. “I love you—”

“Stop there—stop I say!” cried an excited voice behind them. They turned in dismay. The Earl of Everdun stood in the doorway. Sallie looked from him to Hemingway and back again as though unable to believe her eyes.

“Here—I say—I can’t have this sort of thing, you know,” cried the Earl. “I protest—I don’t want to be married off in this way. Huggins, what do you mean by such conduct? You’ve gone too far—much too far. I’m surprised at you, marrying me and my title off in this way without my consent. I never heard of such a thing. It’s absurd.”

“My name is not Huggins.”

“Oh, I say, Huggins, don’t try to carry the joke any further.”

“It’s no joke to me, I assure you. My name is Hemingway—not Huggins, and I am—”

What he intended to say the Earl never knew. Sallie stood before him with flashing eyes. “Is that—that creature that was here your—your wife?” She was on the verge of tears. “I think you’ve treated me shamefully—shamefully!”

“My wife!” roared Hemingway.

“My wife! Why I never saw her until an hour ago—it’s all the fault of that scoundrel Buttles.”

“Really?” said Sallie, through her tears.

“Have you been making love to this young lady in my name?” asked the Earl sternly.

“Certainly not,” replied Hemingway. “I’ve tried my best to tell her the truth.”

Sallie began to see a great white light.

“Arthur, who is this man?” she asked, looking at Lord Everdun.

“He is the Earl of Everdun,” said Hemingway.

“He the Earl? Then who are you, may I ask?” gasped Sallie.

“Ralph Hemingway, of the *London Times*.”

“And you are *not* the husband of that—that—organist?”

“Merciful heavens—that creature! Why, she belongs to *him*.” He indicated the Earl.

“What are you talking about?” demanded the Earl. “Everybody in this house seems to have gone dotty. His name is Huggins, Miss Flighter, and he’s my chauffeur.”

“I assure you, Miss Flighter,” cried Hemingway, “it is not true.”

“And you are not—not—queer, or anything like that?”

“Certainly not.”

“Then what was all that about—about—Gwendolyn?”

“Gwendolyn!” shouted Lord Everdun in amazement. “Gwendolyn! Am I getting dotty, too?” The words were scarcely out of his mouth when Gwendolyn, who had been having tea in an adjoining room, rushed in and confronted him.

“Archie, Archie,” she cried, “I’m so glad you’ve come. Take me back to London. I don’t like it here.” She rushed up to him joyfully.

“Good heavens!” cried Lord Everdun. “What next?” and he collapsed into a chair. “Where on earth did you come from?”

At this instant, so crucial in his affairs, Mr. Buttles, pursuing the es-

caped Gwendolyn, entered the room. For a moment he failed to see the Earl, seated as he was in the chair, but his eagle eye fell upon Hemingway and Sallie, standing together at the opposite corner of the room. "Come, now, me Lord," he began briskly, "another little attack, me Lord, and you gave me your word—" Suddenly he saw the Earl sitting in the chair. "Oh—er—ah," he trailed off vaguely into nothingness and stood perfectly speechless for the space of perhaps half a minute. It was the first time on record that Mr. Buttles had been utterly unable to say anything. But the training of generations may not thus lightly be cast aside. Passing his hand weakly over his brow Mr. Buttles slowly came to.

"Well, Buttles, I'm back," laughed the Earl.

"So I see, me Lord; so I see. Rather a surprise, me Lord—quite a shock, me Lord, and at my time of life, too me Lord. I shouldn't have expected it of you, me Lord—I shouldn't. I feel quite disconcerted, me Lord."

"Well, you look it. I hear you've been getting things into a pretty mess since I've been gone—reported that I'm about to be married to Miss Flighter, and all that sort of thing."

"Oh, no, me Lord; not at all, me Lord."

"Lord Everdun, put your mind quite at rest—quite," said Sallie, her cheeks flushed with excitement. "I wouldn't marry you for worlds—not for worlds. Go back to Paris with that—that creature," she looked at Gwendolyn; "you need have no fear on that score."

"Oh, are you really going to Paris, Archie? Won't that be just too ripping?" cried Gwendolyn.

"What—going to Paris? What? gasped the Earl in astonishment.

"Exactly, me Lord," said Mr. Buttles eagerly. "Quite so—just what you must do, me Lord—go back to Paris at once, me Lord, and take the lady with you, me Lord. Everything is going on most satisfactory here, me Lord, most satisfactory." Mr. Buttles was beaming—he might yet snatch victory from almost certain defeat.

As he spoke Hemingway started forward. "Satisfactory!" he almost shouted. "Satisfactory—do you think it is satisfactory to me?"

Mr. Buttles fixed him with a watery eye. "There, there, sir," he pleaded, "don't get excited, sir. I'm sure as how, if you leave it to me, it will be quite so, sir. This lady," he indicated Sallie with a sweeping gesture, "knows who you are, sir. No one else need know, need they, sir—except maybe her parents, sir? You remain here as before, sir—enjoyin' the company of the lady you admires—we will explain everything to her, sir, and nobody else need be a bit the wiser. Why, sir, it's a perfect arrangement, simply perfect." Its perfection so appealed to Mr. Buttles that he fairly palpitated with pleasure. "What do you say, sir?" he paused expectantly, then turned to Lord Everdun. "And, me Lord, I beg that you and the lady will start at once, me Lord, at once—before the others come down to dinner, me Lord."

"Not so fast," said Lord Everdun. "I want to understand this thing first." He turned to Sallie. "Did this—ah—gentleman"—he indicated Hemingway—"tell you who he was before he—ah—addressed you?"

"Yes, several times," replied Sallie.

"Then why did you still think him to be—me?"

Sallie gave Mr. Buttles a withering look.

"That man—Buttles—told me that you were subject to temporary fits of madness."

Lord Everdun laughed until he almost cried. "Ha—ha! Good! Good!" he roared. With a sheepish smile, Mr. Buttles undertook to defend himself.

"Pardon, me Lord; only a little subterfuge, me Lord, which I thought quite justified, under the circumstances—quite justified, me Lord."

"Subterfuge! ha—ha! Good! Excellent!" The Earl turned to Hemingway. "By Jove," he said, "you acted squarely; 'pon my word, you did."

Hemingway seemed unable to ap-

preciate the humor of the situation. "Look here, sir," he exclaimed; "understand once and for all. I am Ralph Hemingway, of the London *Times*. I got into this ridiculous situation through no fault of mine, as you very well know. Now I'm through with it—I leave here tonight."

"But, sir," wailed Mr. Buttles in a voice quivering with pathos, "then everything will be ruined—everything. You *must* stay, sir."

"And I must go back to Paris," Lord Everdun supplemented.

"You may go to the devil for all I care," growled Hemingway.

"You'll stay, sir—I beg." He turned to Sallie. "Won't you persuade him, miss?"

"Why should he?" asked Sallie coldly.

Mr. Buttles drew himself together for a final effort. "Well, you see, miss, his Lordship here, miss, had invited a lot of people down, miss, and finding he had important—most important—business in Paris, miss—business of State, miss—Foreign Office, miss—extremely important, miss, arks this gentleman, miss, to take his place during his absence, miss, so as not to disappoint his guests, miss. A very simple arrangement, miss—no harm meant to nobody, miss—a favor to his Lordship, miss, on Mr. Hemingway's part, miss. Arsk him to stay, miss, I beg of you."

Sallie turned to Hemingway and gazed at him ardently. "Is this true?" she asked.

"Well—practically," he admitted—"though I really had no voice in the matter; the thing was forced upon me."

"And do you want to stay?" she continued. Her eyes were very soft—her face very near.

"If I can, and still keep your respect," he began.

"Why not?" said Sallie, her eyes sparkling with mischief. "I think it would be lots of fun."

Mr. Buttles stepped forward briskly. "Thank you, miss. Very kind of you indeed, miss." He took out his watch.

"And now, me Lord, just time, me Lord, to make the eight-fifty. Glad to have had the honor of this visit, me Lord." As he spoke, sounds were heard in the hallway adjoining. Mr. Buttles quaked with alarm. "Quick, me Lord; this way, me Lord, this way." He hustled the Earl and Gwendolyn through the still open doorway leading to the terrace. "I'll send a trap around at once, me Lord."

"Never mind, Buttles," called out the Earl, as he disappeared from view. "My car's outside. Good-bye. You're a wonder. Ha—ha!" they heard him laughing to himself as he departed. Even as he went out, Palmerston and Flatsaddle stumbled in, arm in arm, with every appearance of having tarried overlong with the Scotch and soda. They caught sight of the Earl as he turned in the doorway to say good-bye.

"Phew!—a close shave," muttered Mr. Buttles, wiping his brow.

"By Jove, Flatsaddle, ol' boy," cried Palmerston, pointing unsteadily at the doorway through which Lord Everdun had just disappeared, "we've got 'em—seein' double—don't y' know jush a moment ago—saw two Archie's—two Archies! Isn't wonnerful—wonnerful—what?"

"Ish all right, Percy, m' boy," Flatsaddle reassured him; "ish all right—inflam—flammasin' optic nerve—very ord'nary—very. Don't forget—'leven-forty—goin' 'lope with my own wife. Funny, deuced funny, eh, Percy, m' boy? 'Lope with own wife—you come 'long with Dottie, if y' can stand her, Percy, m' boy—I'm 'lopin' with own wife tonight—much better form—much—only way 'lope—I think—'lope with own wife—much more comfutable—what?"

Palmerston smiled pleasantly. "All right, ol' boy—anything to 'blige. 'Lope with whoever you say—all same to me. Lesh have drink." They lurchd toward the cellarette in the corner.

Mr. Buttles stepped to the door into the hall and held aside the portières as Sallie and Hemingway passed through.

The others were descending the great staircase.

"Built in the twelfth century," Mrs. Flighter was saying to her husband, sweeping the great hallway with her fan.

"Looks it," growled Mr. Flighter, glancing about disdainfully.

Miss Dorrington and Mrs. Flatsaddle came down arm in arm. "Delightfully droll, don't you know," said Miss Dorrington. "Awfully," rejoined Mrs. Flatsaddle, observing the Flighters through her lorgnon. As Mrs. Tipton and the Honorable James Bagshot

joined the party, Mr. Buttles stepped to the doorway leading to the dining-room.

"Dinner is served, me Lord," he announced blandly, all his wonted cheeriness of manner restored. And as the last of the party filed slowly into the dining room, Mr. Buttles turned to James, who stood rigidly, holding aside the portières on the other side of the doorway, and with unblushing effrontery and the untroubled expression of a Hindoo idol, deliberately winked.

THE END

UNTO THIS LAST

By REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN

*It must end, then? Now? Today?
Well, I have but this to say:*

High design and dear desire
Went to feed your altar fire—
Honor and ambition toss'd
In the flame, nor counted lost.
Tinsel gold? Ah, false or true,
What I had I gave to you—
All; and you (how shall I say?)
Took it, smiled, and glanced away;
Swift to love me, yes; and yet
Swifter, Princess, to forget!
Half a humming bird and half
Woman. I can hear you laugh,
Careless (so the world is kind)
Of the wounds you leave behind—
Heedless, heartless, beautiful.

Thus I love you: just to do
All these things again for you;
Just to be a vessel wrought
For your pleasure: life and though
Crushed for you to drink of; then,
With the cups of other men
Offered, just to have you say:
"It was sweet"—and toss away!

THE SUN GONE DOWN

By MINNIE BARBOUR ADAMS

"THERE!" cried the nurse as I staggered and caught at the railing. "I knew all the time that you weren't able to go."

"I slipped, honey," I hastened to explain, very glad, however, to cling tightly to her arm.

"And on such a day, too," she continued; "raw, and cold, and threatening rain."

"I don't see why Mr. Bannerman didn't come for me," I complained for the twentieth time. "He must be out of town and didn't get my letter."

"Here comes the car! You've got a key, you say?"

"Sure!"

"But, Miss Lenore, five cents is so little to—"

"To ride down town on, you old duck?" I laughed, throwing my arms around her neck and kissing her heartily. "Say! Do you know, you're a Jim Dandy; and you bet I won't forget you for one while!" She turned a sort of streaked magenta, and the tears came into her eyes.

"I—I'll miss you, Miss Lenore," she whispered, and kissed me back, and then started to help me on the car. But, Lordy! she didn't need to. There was quite a bunch of men on the back platform, and I just raised my eyes with a helpless, appealing look in 'em, and the thing was done. Gnarly, hard hands, and dapper, gloved hands; big hands and little hands, reached down; and I was in the car in a twinkling, outwardly calm, but laughing inside.

Lots of women were standing and I supposed I was in for it, so gathered a strap and went at it. My gracious! but my legs were wobbly; and when-

ever I looked down things got mighty mixed, so I tried to count the wrinkles in the back of a fellow's neck, and had just got to three when he looked up. I sighed, oh! just the teentiest sigh, and hung heavier on the strap. Either that or the mournful look I gave him acted like an electric shock. He was out of that seat and crowding me into it in a jiffy; for, of course, they slid along the moment he got up, he being so awful fat he had 'em about squeezed to death. Then he made eyes at me all the rest of the way down town, but I wouldn't have minded if they hadn't been such horrid little piggy eyes.

There was a man opposite—a big, fine-looking fellow—and he never once looked up, but went on reading his paper as though such a thing as a pretty girl didn't exist for him. He was good, too; not one of the ranting, pious kind, I judged, but just good and wholesome—which Bannerman ain't. "Yes," says I to myself, "you might as well face it, Lennie; Bannerman is only a big, guzzling, blaspheming, crooked toad." I got out of breath there or I should have added more, for I knew a dozen names that just fit; though I beg the toads' pardon, for I always liked them a lot. They are powerful ugly, but it's all on the outside, which is not the case with Bannerman.

"Really, I hadn't ought to feel this way," I thought. "He's been pretty good, taking me in as he did when that fire at the store burned every stitch I had and threw me out of a job; and I was scorched up scandalous, too." I thought of the pretty rooms he'd fixed up for me, and the nice clothes waiting, and wished I was there. He

must get me some winter duds right off. December! and me wearing the little gray jacket and hat I happened to have on that warm day in October when they hustled me off to the hospital. He'd about half promised me a sealskin; and I believed just getting home this way was good for the other half. I'd get a velvet skirt of the same shade, and a cute little hat and—

"Twenty-eighth Street!"

Why, here I was at home. Old Pudgy had reluctantly got off a block above; and, as I got up, feeling pretty uncertain and shaky, Mr. Indifference got up, too, folded his paper, put it in his pocket, and then, without so much as a glance at me, took my arm with a polite, "Allow me."

Oh, dear! being pretty has its advantages. I didn't suppose Nurse Anne knew what it was to be helped this way. "What would it seem like," I wondered, "to be as ugly as she?" Then, with a little spasm of regret—owing to the weakness, I suppose—I added, "And as good."

I was swung across the other track, out of the way of a north-bound car, whisked in front of an auto and onto the walk, allowed to settle for an instant and then the gentleman lifted his hat and ran for his already moving car.

Home again! It did seem good, though I was pretty mad at Bannerman for not coming after me. It was—yes, it was beginning to sprinkle, and I'd better hurry for I had no umbrella, and already I could feel the cold through my thin gray shoes. How familiar it all seemed! There was the Cooper restaurant, and opposite was Roe's; and there was Mr. Roe's pleasant face at the window. I was so glad and excited that, before I thought, I nodded and he returned it, though he looked sort of puzzled.

I'd go home and get into something warm and comfy, and then telephone for something to eat, and lots of it, for I was starving, as usual. "My gracious! Would hunger never stop gnawing at my vitals?" I wondered. Ever since the operation I had had but that one thought, greedy little pig that I was.

I hastily climbed the long flight of stone steps that led to the door and rang impatiently, for it was raining like the dickens by this time. Sam opened it, looked surprised, started to speak, but thought better of it and only grinned in answer to my "Hello" as I hurried upstairs. I was so nervous and excited that I could scarcely get the key out of my purse. Would the rooms be as bright and cozy as I left them? Had they taken good care of my precious finches and ferns? I—I hoped Bannerman was away, which I knew was awfully selfish; but I'd surely give him a good hug for it all when he got home. I turned the key with shaking fingers and stepped—onto a bare, echoing floor, and saw—only bare walls and staring windows!

It seemed hours that I stood there, dazed and bewildered, clinging weakly to the door; but I knew Bannerman—the sneak—well enough to know what had happened. At length, I tipped a hammer and some tacks out of an old kitchen chair and dropped into it, trembling with cold and weakness and fright. What was I to do, sick, hungry, penniless, in this great city? I didn't know a soul of whom I could ask help, and there was no use hunting for work, for my pale face would give me away every time. Go back to the hospital? Oh, Lordy, no! I'd nearly died of lonesomeness the two months I was there; and would plumb, if it hadn't been for that dear old ugly duckling, Anne. They wouldn't take me back, anyway, unless I was sicker than I was—which I was likely to be, getting so tired and nervous.

I tried to think, but my mind was in a whirl. Then I thought of the finches, soft, cunning little things, and had a good cry, which made me feel better. I was awful mad at Bannerman, the low-down, ornery brute! And I was scared, too; but 'way down in my heart there was something singing just heavenly. It was relief, and though I starved I couldn't help it.

Leaving the key in the door, I slipped downstairs and out without seeing a soul, for which I was mighty thankful.

My feet were wet through in a minute, and scraggly wet wisps of hair began to cling to my face. And hungry! I could have begun at the front of a bake-shop and eaten my way right through and out the back door, I was that ravenous.

I wandered on and on, not paying much attention where I was, till a couple of ladies coming out of a railroad office jostled against me, and I happened to think of Charlie Baxter who used to be there. He was a good-hearted chump, Charlie was; but he had been just about daffy over me before the fire—and before I met Bannerman, curse him! He wasn't exactly my style, being squinty and pious; but I'd got to a place where I couldn't afford to be very fastidious.

I stepped into a little shop next door and wiped my face on my handkerchief, and dabbed it with the powder puff from my stocking; and when the longest scraggles were pinned back my hair didn't look half bad, for all the short hairs broke round my face in little damp rings. I was frightfully pale, but that seemed only to make my eyes larger and brighter; and I bit my poor white lips, that would shake in spite of all I could do, till a little color came creeping into them—to see what all the row was about, I guess.

Having done all I could, but feeling that I had mighty little to work or, I put on a jaunty air and a happy, *matinée*-every-day expression, and sauntered into the office. Yes, sauntered, humming under my breath snatches of a new song that everyone was wild about, as though I was sort of abstracted, trying to decide whether it should be Grand Opera that night with a Shanley finale, or the great ball at Madison Square Garden; and as though weak knees and a punctured balloon under my short-ribs did not exist.

What if he wasn't there any more? I felt a still further collapse at the pit of my stomach at the bare possibility. No, thank the Lord and the General Manager! there he was, smiling and talking in his kind-hearted way to a frowzy old woman.

February, 1909—3

"I wish to see Mr. Baxter; he's an old friend," I told the man who politely asked what he could do for me. As he passed, I saw him speak low to Charlie, who looked up and nodded, though I was certain he didn't know who I was; he is so near-sighted, poor dear!

Oh, gracious! Would old frowzy ever get through asking questions? I couldn't hold this gait but a few minutes longer, and—there! she was going. I gathered up every bit of strength and sense I had for a final dash that might take me safely under the wire; and, as Charlie came hurrying up, I was idly turning over some time-tables.

"How do you do?" he said in his low, sympathetic voice. "You wished—" Then he got the proper focus with those balky eyes of his, and they began to widen. "Why, it's Lennie! It is Lennie!" he cried, so pleased and excited-like that my throat hurt worse than my stomach. And my eyes! Lordy! How they smarted! I just longed to burst out crying and throw myself in his arms as they do on the stage, but I made a mighty effort and succeeded in only giving him my hand and saying calmly, "So you have not forgotten me."

"Forgotten you? Oh, Lennie, I could never do that," he returned softly.

"And have you been here ever since I saw you last?"

"Yes, right here," he said joyfully, patting my hand and squinting at me anxiously. "But, Lennie dear, you don't look well."

I laughed.

"Too many balls and parties. I'm awfully tired of it all," I said, leaning forward and looking straight into his honest blue eyes. He used to wish I was less pleasure-loving and frivolous; and I believed that would fetch him if anything would.

"Yes, I'm going to cut it all and go out to Chicago and take care of an old aunt," I said resignedly. I think poor old Aunt Mag, the only one I ever had, turned in her grave.

"Won't you be awful lonesome, Lennie?" asked Charlie pityingly.

"Yes, awful. She lives way out in a suburb called Bloomington, and is a mile from a neighbor, I believe."

"Heavens, girl, you can't stand that!" he cried; then asked, very gently, "Do you want to go, dear?"

I realized that whatever was to be done must be done quick, for it was only with the greatest difficulty that I kept my feet, and a strange mist was creeping over my eyes. I had disengaged one cold, nerveless hand from his warm ones to put back my hair, something we women would do—if we could—were the pallbearers to carelessly jounce a lock out of place while lowering us to our last berth. Now, I put this hand on his arm, and my heart and soul were in my eyes as I whispered:

"No, Charlie, I don't want to go." Then I let them fall as though scared at what I had shown him, and I trembled all over. That wasn't put on. I just released the brakes a second, and tired, scandalized nature furnished the quavers. He gathered the straying hand in again, and when I stole a glance at him he looked awful troubled and that questioning look that was always in his poor, short-sighted eyes had deepened.

"Don't go, Lennie," he begged. "I know there is something back of all this, and you don't want to be hasty."

"Oh, I might as well go," I said gloomily. "My aunt needs me, and that's what no one here does."

"Lennie, dear girl, don't say that!" he said in his gentle, soothing way, and drew me nearer to him.

"Oh, Lordy, it's coming!" I thought. "Hold fast, old girl; it'll soon be over."

"I tell you what to do." He shifted both my hands into one of his and briskly pulled out his watch. "It's half past three now, and I get off in half an hour. You go home with me for dinner, and we'll talk it over with Caroline."

"Caroline?" I repeated questioningly.

"Yes. Why, Lennie, come to think of it, you know Caroline." And his face beamed with sudden remembrance.

"She was bookkeeper at Bernstein's before the fire. We were married shortly afterward."

Well, I got out of there, though I scarcely know how. I remember congratulating him, and getting off a lot of rot about always thinking they were made for each other, and that I was wild to see her and would put off going a few days so I could run up. Lies, every one! I remembered no Caroline. He was so happy and excited, having someone that he could rave to about her, that he went clear outside with me and stood, bare-headed, in the rain; and I smiled like a Chessy cat, and patted his arm as a sort of antidote to the other pat I'd given him, while, all the time, I was saying under my breath, "O Lord! O Lord! Help me out of this!"

Well, he ran down or got drowned out at last, and I made my get-away. It took the last scrap of backbone in me to get out of the neighborhood respectable, and then you bet I wobbled—wobbled till a policeman, thinking I had a stronger cargo aboard than the nasty sip I got at the fountain in Madison Square, walked along with me a spell.

It was getting awfully cold, the rain was turning to sleet, and the biting wind set me humming "From Greenland's icy mountains"; but my teeth chattered so that I didn't reach "India's coral strand." Workingmen and shopgirls began to troop past, most of them eager and expectant, with some sort of a home as their goal. Women in velvets and furs, few of them as attractive, many of them no better, than I, began to hurry out of the big stores to waiting carriages and autos; and I could picture the great, fine homes uptown waiting for them. For them there were lights, warmth, food and little, clinging arms; while for me—I wondered, in a dazed sort of way, if the Hudson River wouldn't furnish me about as comfortable lodgings as I could hope to find. I laughed aloud as I thought that at least there would be no lack of liquid refreshments.

I had stopped for a moment beneath an awning, pretending to be looking at

some lovely ball dresses in the window; and now a man with eyes like the alligator up at the Zoo, hearing the laugh, stepped up to me.

"Wouldn't you like one of them, sweetheart?" he asked thickly, leering into my face.

"No, I'm going to have a nice little shroud!" I said crossly, and headed for the river. He didn't follow.

Now something strange happened. I wasn't cold or wet or hungry any more, for there wasn't any me only from the shoulders up, and that just floated along, merry and gay. Of course the rest of me might have been having trouble, but I didn't know it. I zig-zagged around a lot, and bumped into people, and I remember saying to myself when I'd sailed right through and over a sassy old cat who threatened to call a policeman, "Lennie, if you don't stop this bouncing around, you'll get juggled as sure as fate." The next thing I knew I was following a very tall female who had on a black and white striped dress. Even while I looked she suddenly collapsed like an accordion and wasn't more than four feet tall, but mighty wide out, and the dress was plaid. Then, in a minute, up she shot again; and I like to died laughing, it was so funny.

"What great strides we're making," I thought soberly. "Now a thing like that would not have been possible a hundred years ago. Oh, how I wish I could be here a hundred years hence!" Then I sniveled some, feeling, as Mike Mumphrey said, "that it was dumb doubtful." The tears blinded me so that I lost her for a moment; but soon saw her go up the steps of a big building and go in. I did ditto, and when the big door softly swung shut behind me all the cold, the rain and the awful roaring noise that had nearly crazed me was shut out; and I was in a great, dim place that was very warm and still. Oh, Lord! but it was nice.

I followed the woman, who now seemed about medium-sized, for quite a spell, and then she climbed some steps to where a soft light was burning. The rest of me had caught up now and

was awfully tired again, so I dropped onto a seat, or something right in front of them, and, oh, it was just heavenly, sitting down.

Slowly something began to evolve from the velvety gloom before me. First the keyboard, and then, one by one, the pipes of a great organ. A man sat before it, his white, upturned face beautiful and unearthly in the mellow light. Who was he? I wondered. I had surely met him, for his face was vaguely familiar. Then I remembered the picture I had seen in a window one day and begged Bannerman to buy for me. Yes, it was he! There was the same rapt, pale face, and the same black gown and slender white hands on the keys; only in the picture there was a halo about the head.

"I wish we knew what he was singing," I said wistfully to Bannerman, feeling awfully solemn.

"Humph!" snorted Bannerman, "he isn't singing, goosie; that's the guy that plays the piano down at Tony's, waiting for his cue." That was Bannerman, always making light of everything good and holy. Written down at the bottom of the picture was Israel—no, it was Israfil—one of the prophets, I guess.

A soft melody came floating down to me, as gentle as the sleepy little breeze that, like baby fingers in your hair, ruffles the lake and sets the leaves to rustling at sunset. It grew louder and plainer, and then gradually drifted into one of the old hymns we used to sing at home. Others followed, some I didn't know. I didn't hear all of them, just a line here or a verse there that seemed to be for me alone. And that voice, that tender, pleading voice!

Oh, how my heart and throat ached! I seemed to see myself as I was ten years ago, back in the village; a dreamy, reverent thing on which the breath of evil had never blown. With what fervor I had sung these very hymns, though they had meant nothing to me then but the voicing of the exalted rapture that possessed me. But now!

"Though like a wanderer,
The sun gone down,"
sang the voice. That was me; in all the world there was no wanderer who had strayed farther than I; and the sun had gone down for me, never to rise again.

"Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone."

That meant the black waters of the Hudson rolling over me, of course. And would my poor, bewildered, aching head have only a stone for a pillow?—my pretty little head that had been admired, raved over—and turned. Well, I didn't deserve anything else. I'd brought it all on myself, and I might as well go and have it over with, I thought, staggering to my feet.

"There! Don't cry, girl!" I comforted the poor thing who was shaking with sobs, and holding tightly to the back of the seat as though she would never let go. "Just a plunge and it will be over. It will be a mighty cold, hard bed, but"—a sudden cheering thought coming to me—"maybe mamma will come and kiss us good night and tuck us in. But my prayers!" Attracted by the dim light on the altar, I let go my hold on the back of the seat and stumbled toward it.

Somehow, I couldn't manage to get up the steps, so I knelt on the bottom one, with an uneasy feeling, however, that I should have gone to the white something beyond, that to my delirious eyes was my own little bed at home. I bowed my head and clasped my hands. What should I say? I couldn't think of a single blessed word. Oh, God! I, a poor wanderer on whom the sun had gone down, had forgotten how to pray. I must think! What did I used to say? Why, I just couldn't lay my head down on that stone and go to sleep without telling the Lord how sorry I was for the blamed fizzle I'd made of life, and beg him to be as easy on me as he could. I locked my numb fingers in my hair and shook my good-for-nothing head about off; still nothing would come. Mamma was waiting to tuck me in; it was growing very dark, and so cold—

"O Lord, help me!" I screamed; and then the words came.

"Now I lay me down to sleep"—I thought of the stone and shivered. "I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake"—that looked as though I was trying to fool the Lord: I never intended to wake—oh, well! He knew what I meant—"I pray the Lord my soul to take." Mamma's arms were about me now, and a solemn voice, the voice of the singer, said, "Amen!" After that, things were mighty hazy for a spell. I strangled and choked over a glass of wine; and when I got my breath I laughed.

"What is it, dear?" someone asked.

"Fancy finding stuff like that down here," I said. "I supposed it was all water."

"Down where?" again asked the voice, which I now saw belonged to a woman who wore a black and white checked dress.

"At the bottom of the Hudson," I replied; and the next I knew the cold rain was again beating on my head, and I heard a panting voice close to my face say:

"Never mind the umbrella, Aunt Martha; she couldn't be wetter than she is. Get on ahead and open the door." This the lady must have done, for we went into a place delightfully warm and smelly, and I caught sight of a big black person with a red thing on its head, and a long fork in its hand. For a moment I thought it must be the devil.

"Now you see what you get for being so bad, Lennie," I said, and buried my face in someone's neck. But, as nothing happened, and I didn't get jabbed or anything, I peeped; and saw it was taking up doughnuts with a fork, which, I take it, devils don't do, and that encouraged me.

"Oh, Israfil, just one!" I begged as he gathered me up and started on again.

"One what?" he gasped.

"One doughnut. You can charge it to—to Charlie," I replied, thinking Charlie and his precious Caroline would be willing to do that much for me, now that I was gone.

"Are you hungry?" he asked pityingly.

"Hungry? Lordy! I haven't had a scrap of anything since breakfast, days ago; and then I was too excited to eat."

"You shall have all you want, you poor girl," he promised. He laid me on a bed; and Aunt Martha, as Israfil called the checker board, and Snowball, as they both called the devil, rubbed me generously with alcohol, and fed me stingily on toast and beef tea.

I wanted the doughnut so bad I could have cried, but I took it they didn't care to charge it, not knowing whether there was a Charlie or not. One has to be pretty careful in a big city like this, I know. But one good thing about it: though they fed me sparingly, they kept right on the job. Aunt Martha fed me, and I tried to be nice and not gobble, but what was one to do with a stomach just screeching for more all the time? At length, I even ceased to regret the doughnut, I was that full. Snowball rubbed me, and her hands were so rough I thought I'd be worn to a shaving; but when I squirmed and told her to save the filings to patch me up with, she laughed and let up.

Oh, but I was happy! I soon fell asleep, solaced inside, and smoking, scorching hot outside; and soaked so full of alcohol that I'd have been afraid of spontaneous combustion if I hadn't been at the bottom of the Hudson with my head lying on a stone.

A long time afterward, when I'd been through a lot and had drowned about twenty separate and distinct times, and had been nibbled by fishes and had had to shoo away sea-serpents and devil fishes and things with my apron till I was tired to death, I awoke, clothed and in my right mind. There! I've started out to be accurate in all things and Aunt Martha's big nightgown, that didn't touch me anywhere, could no more be called clothes than could the sheets. But I was in my right mind, fast enough, and so astonished that I just lay and stared.

I'd been surprised a few times during

my short but eventful career, as they say in books. For instance, that time when I helped mamma dress that lovely doll for Polly Waters, and before I went to bed each night I used to slip into the cold parlor and most kiss the paint off her cheeks, I loved her so. Then, at the tree, I wouldn't look when they began to take her down, but put my fingers in my ears and hid my poor, green little eyes in my muff. Someone sort of crowded in front of me till at last I had to open 'em; and there was that blessed baby in my lap. And I was surprised when that darling old John Thomas cat had nine of the cutest little kittens you ever saw. And that time Deacon Simms proposed to me when I thought he'd been coming to see mamma all winter. But any I could think of was not equal to the surprise I felt when I found I wasn't dead a bit. There wasn't a drop of water or a sea-going animal in sight, and when I wiggled my head there was nothing colder or more unfeeling than down beneath it. Lordy! I was glad; and I just hoped I could lie right there the rest of my natural life.

As the days passed and I grew stronger, my clothes worried me a lot while I lay counting the roses in the wallpaper and thinking with sadness of my unworthy past. Whatever was I to get into when I got up? I didn't suppose I could more than get my toes into those pretty, gray shoes; and all the rest of my garments would likely proclaim the fact that I had neglected to "use wool soap."

"Have you any friends, anyone who will worry, you know?" Aunt Martha had asked when I first came to.

"Not one that would have cared, had the billows o'er me rolled," I returned with a little sob.

"Well, you have now, dear child," she replied, patting my arm consolingly. "Is there anything you would like to send for?" she went on. I knew she was thinking of clothes.

"No. Barring the garments in which I came to you, I have none. They went up in smoke," I added,

thinking bitterly of the sealskin and accompaniments.

"Burned?" asked Aunt Martha in surprise.

I hardly knew what to say for a moment; then thought of Bernstein's and realized that I had blundered into the truth.

"Well, don't worry," she said kindly, and kissed me good night.

The sewing machine buzzed like a swarm of bumble-bees for the next few days, and the first time I was able to sit up Aunt Martha laid a pretty lilac wrapper out on the bed, and cunning little crocheted slippers, and petticoats and things, till I was that overcome by her kindness that all I could do was hug 'em and cry. That set Snowball off, and poor Aunt Martha had a moist time of it for a while.

"But what have I done that you should thus array me in purple and fine linen?" I asked, trying to smile, though my lips would tremble.

"All this is very little for a poor girl whose clothing has gone up in smoke," deprecated Aunt Martha, while Snowball muttered something about a poor, shorn lamb and took herself and her snivels to the kitchen.

As it was in the beginning, so it was to the end, which sounds antheim, but was a fact, which I should hope antheims are not, always. As I progressed from sitting up in bed with an inverted chair at my back to sitting in a chair of larger size, then to being about my room, then infesting all the rooms, and lastly to going across the bit of lawn to church often, and going down town seldom, the garments suitable for each occasion were laid out on my bed by that dear saint, Aunt Martha.

No one but the Good Shepherd, who tolled his poor, straying sheep into the fold with a plaid dress, will ever know how happy I was during those blessed days. I laughed and sang till Dicky nearly split his throat trying to keep up with me, and then Snowball would break loose in the kitchen, while poor Aunt Martha, with her hands to her ears, would pretend to be nearly distracted.

As I grew stronger, I began to long for something to do; and, at last, Aunt Martha gave me a tiny pair of booties to crochet. They were for her niece, Caroline Baxter, she said.

"Jerusalem! I can see Charlie's finish!" I burst out; and then felt awfully ashamed when she looked sort of shocked. I'd been holding in mighty well and doing the prunes and prisms act to perfection; and it made me mad when I let that slip. Well, anyway, I was awfully glad for Charlie's sake, though I was afraid the poor fellow would be loonier than ever. I could just see the cunning little feet in the booties as I worked, and I hoped they'd be boy feet, strong, reliant ones, instead of weak, straying girlish ones like some I was intimately acquainted with. Then I made a little white kimono for it on my own account, and bound it in blue and embroidered forget-me-nots in each corner; and, as it was all corners, I felt they wouldn't forget me for one while.

I helped make gingham dresses and warm flannel petticoats for Aunt Martha's poor; even fitted out one whole family from pa's wampus down to a stunning suit for Jennie, which I made out of my gray dress; it having occupied its time in shrinking scandalous while I was wandering around in the rain that terrible night. Of course some of 'em had to be bought, pa's trousers, for instance; but I planned the whole trousseau, and sewed most of it.

I had been in the house a long time before I met Israfil. He was always gone before I was up; and, as the winter progressed, he was very busy among his poor, as there was much sickness and suffering. I heard him, though, very often, for they found during those first days of delirium that if they opened the window while he was playing over at the church, it quieted me like magic. He scarcely ever missed playing and singing during the twilight hour, no matter how busy he was, for it rested and soothed him as nothing else could, he told them.

Later, I took the hour for much the same purpose, though, heaven knows,

they were different; while Israfil had nothing to do but sing praises unto the Lord, I groveled on the floor, holding fast to the bed leg, and groaned and cried for mercy on me, a poor sinner. I had made up my mind that first day, when I found that I was not dead, as I fully expected and deserved to be, that I'd live as I ought to live, and as I had no excuse for not living with all my good, God-fearing New England ancestors behind me. I would work hard; I'd starve, if necessary, though I hoped it wouldn't come to that; but I'd walk straight, so help me God! and if there was anything in besieging the Throne of Grace for forgiveness, I would get it. Some day the dear Lord would say to Cherubim, or Seraphim, or whoever was on duty that day: "Dear me! That Lennie will drive me crazy! Run and tell the Recorder to balance her account." So, no matter what I was doing, I desisted as the tones of the great organ—my Angelus, I called it—drifted over to us; and, going into my room, I closed the door.

Oh, why had I forgotten the teachings of my blessed mother? I, who knew better; I, who ought to have been an example—heaven knows I had been, in a way—to the girls at Bernstein's. But what the men pronounce my ravishing beauty, and the girls called my good looks, had proved my downfall.

We had been a gay set at Bernstein's, and kept on getting gayer; and we laughed and danced and sang, paying little heed to the band of ravening wolves that always prowled about us in the shadows, seeking whom they could devour. Once in a while one of the girls forgot herself and wandered too near the lurking foe in some dark corner, and got picked off. Then we girls would chatter and scold for awhile, like a lot of angry wrens at a sparrow; but we soon forgot it and went on dancing. Our natural love for pretty clothes; our longing for a good time; sometimes hunger and cold, and, in my case, the devouring element, were warm allies of the sleek, well-fed devils who always prowled about the edge of our crowd. But that was no excuse for me;

and I felt that I had a long job ahead getting forgiven, devoting, as I did, but an hour a day to it.

One Sunday evening Snowball had gone to gladden the eyes of her family, and Aunt Martha the dying hours of one of her poor. I had been reading "The Lives of the Saints" for some days—and mighty dry reading I found it; but I kept at it, saying over and over that it was good for me, just as I used to when I had to drink a bowlful of nasty, bitter boneset, though I'm sure I beg the "Saints" pardon—the boneset's—for comparing 'em; but, really, I can't see yet any sense in some of their deeds, and I'm lots better than I was. For instance, that old duf—holy person that fasted on a gate post for so many years. I was open to almost any sort of engagement that would make me better, but that did seem a little severe.

Well, anyway, I was awfully tired of them this evening, so went in to the piano and was soon deep in the dear old homey hymns of my girlhood. I sang on and on. Every one has some blessed memory clinging to it; and, at last, I got that worked up that I dropped my head on the book and should have wept had not a voice behind me said entreatingly:

"Miss Lenore?"

It was the parson; and he must have suspected my intention and wished to head me off.

"You have a beautiful voice," he said, coming to the piano.

"How long have you been here?" I asked. I'd put a lot of shivers and trills of my own in when I first began, and I did hope he hadn't heard 'em.

"Oh, just a few minutes," he replied quickly. "And I beg your pardon for not making my presence known at once. You've had considerable instruction, I see."

"Yes, considerable," I agreed, trying hard to quit blushing and be nice and ladylike.

"Here in the city," he went on.

"No, up at Perryville. I took of Hallelujah Potts, and you better believe I earned 'em!" I went on, forgetting my embarrassment in thinking

of old grievances. "Twice a day, rain or shine, hot or cold, for three years, I carried them their quart."

"Quart?" he said, looking startled.

"Oh, just milk," I hastened to explain. "We kept a cow."

"Oh, I see," he replied, looking relieved. "This Hallelujah—ah—person must have been a good teacher."

"He was when he wasn't—that is, *was* sober."

"Was not his title a trifle misleading?" he asked, smiling.

"Oh, land, no!" I assured him. "You should have heard him when he *—was*."

He laughed outright then, but it had never been any laughing matter to me, poor, scared little warbler that I was.

"Would you mind coming over to the church tomorrow afternoon, and running over some new music with me?" he asked.

I stared. "Me!—I!" I corrected, in surprise.

"Both," he returned, laughing again.

"But Hallelujah said that while my voice was strong and—and beautiful, it was hard and unfeeling; had no more sweetness than a blue-jay's," I objected.

"It is *all* feeling and sweetness, Miss Lenore," he assured me; "just the voice I want to appeal to the hearts of my people."

Well, I was surprised; and I wondered what had changed my ragtime, coon song screecher into a "Come Ye Disconsolate" one.

That day marked the beginning of a new life for me. I took lessons of a great teacher who would have turned up his roman nose at the bare mention of Hallelujah Potts; and I practised for hours each day in the drawing room behind closed doors so as not to set Dickly and Snowball off. But the dearest, sweetest hour of the day was the one I spent with Israfil at the great organ. Sometimes, as our voices rose higher and higher, carried right up to the Throne of Grace by the tones of the organ, I felt that I was forgiven; and my poor, shamed, aching heart was at peace.

He took me with him on many of his visits to the sick and dying, and I was enabled to help in many ways. He fell into the habit of spending most of his evenings at home; something he had not done for years; but he said that preparing his sermons after a long, arduous day of toil was very wearying, and hereafter he should compile 'em mornings.

He wanted me to sing in church not long after he found I could, but I begged off till Easter; it seemed more fitting, somehow, that I should sing in the house of the Lord for the first time that day. And what a—yes—housecleaning my heart and soul got in preparation for that great day!

"I want her to be arrayed like a lily of the field that morning," Israfil said one day, when we were speaking of it.

"Tigah?" asked Snowball.

"Easter," laughed Israfil.

Easter morning I dressed for church in a sort of dream; and when I'd pinned on the long-stemmed, creamy rose that I found beside my plate, I went up to the pier glass in the hall and looked long and earnestly at the radiant figure I saw in it. My princess dress was just the shade of the rose I wore, and fitted me beautifully. Oh, how grateful I was for my slender, rounded form!—for how awful I'd have looked in it if I'd been short and pudgy. And my face! I stared at it in an ecstasy of joy, for it was lovely; brilliantly, wondrously lovely, with something written on it that I had never seen there before. Scarcely knowing what I did, I leaned forward and kissed it.

"Lenore!" cried Israfil sharply at my elbow. "I told you distinctly that I did not want you to tire yourself this morning. Any little duties of this kind, I'm willing—" He leaned toward the glass, and, of course, I naturally looked that way; and he kissed it just where I had. Then he turned to me, a strange glow in his eyes.

"Why did you do it?" he asked huskily.

"Because it—" I faltered.

"Because it is beautiful?"

I nodded.

"Vanity," he said softly.

"Gratitude," I corrected. "The Lord made it."

"True," he said, looking at me intently. Suddenly he took a quick step toward me, both hands extended entreatingly.

"Lenore! my beautiful—beautiful—"

"There's the bell," I reminded quietly, though my heart was singing an Easter anthem all its own.

At the appointed time I came from the study, passed, with unseeing eyes, the familiar boyish faces in the choir stalls; and stood in strange, solemn exaltation at the chancel rail. I grew a little nervous, and shivered with dread during the long *Prélude*. What if I should fail? I wished Israfil would look at me for one second as he had before the pier glass. Then I'd not be afraid to sing before the archangel and all his minions; but all I could see was his profile, and that looked so stern and priestlike that it chilled me still more.

The *Prélude* ended with three notes, soft and gentle as heart beats. Between the last two my eyes wavered from the sheaf of tall lilies that I had been steadfastly regarding and fell on the spot where I had knelt a few months before, a poor, weary wanderer on whom the sun had gone down. Thank God it had risen for me again, bright and glorious! I had found forgiveness, I was cherished, I was—loved!

"He is risen! He is risen!" I sang; the great audience forgotten in the abandonment of joy and ecstasy that overwhelmed me.

The next afternoon, at the usual hour, I danced across the scrap of lawn to the church. That sounds awful frivolous, but it was exactly what I did, for my feet wouldn't walk. They did offend me, but I couldn't afford to pluck 'em off; and then, too, my heart was keeping 'em company; so, the only thing I could do was overlook it.

As I reached the study door it suddenly opened and a man hurried out, nearly falling over me in his haste. He didn't apologize; merely glanced at me with a sneer on his red face; and my

heart sank with a terrible dread when I saw it was a druggist by the name of Blakely, who had a store across the street from where I had lived with Bannerman, and where we used to stop for sodas and things. I had presence of mind enough not to recognize him by so much as the quiver of an eyelash, but went in and closed the door.

For a moment, in the dim light of the study, I did not see Israfil, but when I did my heart stopped beating. He was sitting before his desk, his arms thrown out upon it, his face lying between them, and for a moment I thought he was dead, he was so still.

"Israfil!" I whispered, laying my hand on his arm. He shuddered at the touch, then slowly raised his head; and I cried out when I saw his face. It was ghastly and stricken and old!

"That man! Do you know him?" he demanded hoarsely.

"What man?" I asked to gain time.

"The man you met at the door."

"I never saw him before," I answered unhesitatingly; and may the Lord forgive me the lie, but I could not wound him any deeper.

"You never lived near him?" he asked, a ray of hope creeping into his tortured eyes.

"Never!" I answered again.

He drew me fiercely to him, and poured out in an incoherent torrent the story the tattler had told him. I grew sick with loathing of myself as he held up to my gaze that vile, God-forsaken year I had spent with Bannerman.

Oh, I couldn't own it! Not if I lost my hope of Heaven for it, I couldn't! It seemed as though I must deny it to myself, even; that it *must* have been someone else. That gave me an idea.

"Lenore, answer me!" cried Israfil despairingly, dragging my hand from my face.

"My sister," I whispered.

"Your sister?" he cried in surprise.

"My twin sister," I repeated firmly, half believing it myself.

"Where is she now?" he asked pityingly.

"I don't know," I whispered. "Dead I fear—I hope."

"Oh, my poor darling!" he cried, drawing me down into his arms, and holding me close. "How you have suffered."

"I did—I do," I replied, my face pressed close against his.

"And was that the reason you were going to end it all—indeed, you thought you had—that night you came to us?" he asked.

"Yes; I could no longer endure the shame of it," I replied.

"Oh, Lenore! You dear little white saint!" he cried brokenly. "Can you ever forgive me for listening to that man?"

"You couldn't help it, Israfil," I consoled.

"I should have recalled your pure, innocent face, darling; then I would have known it could not be true. And this sister, Lenore—"

"She has nearly broken my heart," I said burying my face in my hands.

"Oh, my poor little girl!" he cried, kissing my fingers, through which the tears were stealing. "I know I am unworthy, but I love you! I love you! Cannot I share this trouble—every trouble, Lenore?" His soul was in his eyes as he looked into mine, and Heaven was very near. One word, and my poor little, storm-tossed bark, that had all but been on the reefs a moment before, was safe in a sheltered harbor.

A long time afterward, when we were beginning to believe that it really was true, he caught me up in his arms and hastened out to the organ. "Sing, Lenore! Sing!" he commanded, his face radiant with love, as his hands swept the keys.

In the days that followed I used to get scared, I was so happy. I never dreamed that life could be so beautiful. Sometimes, when I sat at work alone, my mind just seething with happy thoughts, I'd shut my eyes tight and say, "Lennie, it's only one of your foolish day dreams. You're up on that Juliet balcony fixin' at the back end of Bernstein's with a pile of atrocities waiting for green roses and pink violets all about you, and when you open your foolish eyes you'll see Sam hurrying up

with another crate of 'em." Then I'd shiver and be most afraid to open 'em, or pretend I was. But, when I did, there I'd be in my pretty room with all the cunning things I was making strewn about; and, hearing a quick step, I'd glance out and see Israfil coming out of the study door, his face as bright and radiant as I felt.

There had been a great change in him. When I first knew him he seemed more saint than man, and was as stern and austere as any old monk could have been. I heard Mr. Bright, who was a deacon, or something, say he was an ascetic, which I thought was something like a dyspeptic till I looked it up; and I don't know yet but what I was about half right. Now, all that was gone, and he was just a beautiful, happy, loving man. Oh, he was good just the same! Lordy!—or gracious! which sounds better from the rector's perspective—I never knew anyone so awfully, consistently good as he; and it sure kept me going some to keep up.

At times I used to wonder how the good Lord dared to give us this bit of Heaven on earth. I should think He'd been afraid that we'd be disappointed when we got up there to find there was no greater happiness in store for us. And, still, would we? But through it all, crowded way down in one corner of my soul was an uneasy feeling that was always waiting till it caught me off my guard to pop into sight. It was the same feeling that you have when you wake up in the morning and realize that something awful has happened, and you don't exactly know what it is. Sometimes you don't want to know, and lie there, half awake, trying to keep your mind a blank. I did it once, and was most asleep again when memory found a tiny crack of my brain unguarded and slipped in a picture of mamma lying silent and cold in the parlor below. I was wide awake in a second, sick and shivering with anguish; and that was the way it was now. Whenever memory found the smallest crevice in my armor, it flaunted in my face that awful lie I'd told Israfil.

But wasn't it a lie, anyway, a lurid,

living—loving lie? For the first few days I did not think of it much. I could not see how I could have done otherwise without breaking his heart and my own; and then I tried to keep it out of sight as much as I could, thinking I about had my hands full, living each day properly as befitted my position. Yet, it grew more and more persistent; and to outwit it I threw myself, heart and soul, into Israfil's work, and joined all the guilds, and attended all the mothers' meetings and things and squeezed in my lessons and practice, and read lots of things a minister's wife should read, though, to my surprise, Israfil barred the "Saints." At last, when I gave up and crawled into bed at night, I was too near gone to say my prayers, so took the precaution to say 'em earlier in the evening; though I don't know as it was strictly necessary to say 'em at all, for if my life was one long lie, it was one long prayer, too.

One day Israfil caught me near the pier glass and dragged me before it, and this time he didn't kiss the glass.

"Lenore, dearest, you are working too hard," he said anxiously; "see how thin you are getting."

I hadn't had time to notice before, but I sure was. I wasn't much thicker through than Snowball's clothes pole, and my garments hung on me as her Mother Hubbard would hang on it.

"Are you ill, Lenore?" he asked, holding me close and looking long and searchingly into my upturned face.

"If I am, it's on account of the steady diet of happiness that I am in no way used to," I replied.

"And nothing is worrying you, sweetheart? Thoughts of your sister, or anything?"

I drew back from him and looked for a long time into his dear, kind face. Oh, if I only dared to tell him, would he not forgive me, loving me as he did? But what if I'd see that old stern look creep into his eyes? What if I was judged by the zealot instead of the man? I couldn't do it then; but I knew very well that I'd have to before I found peace.

At last there came a morning when outraged nature refused to obey the behests of so cruel a taskmaster as I, and I could not rise. I made light of it to the frightened family, laying it to the strain of reading a paper on "The Duties of Mothers to Grown Sons," before the Mothers' Club at the choir boys' spread of the evening before—anything that came to my mind. But all the time I knew it was serious; and I knew I should tell Israfil, come what would, before the day ended.

Late in the afternoon I was awakened from the troubled sleep into which I had fallen by the soft notes of the organ. At first I did not think it was Israfil, it was so unlike his masterful touch; but, a moment later, when the hesitating, erratic notes merged into "O Promise Me," I knew it was he; and that he was playing to me alone.

"Oh, I must tell him now—this instant!" Possessed by frenzy, I slipped out of bed and attempted to dress; but I couldn't seem to find a garment, or get inside it when I did. In desperation I tried to pin up my hair, but my hands shook so it all fell down again. Oh, what should I do? I felt that I couldn't wait another moment. Thrusting my bare feet into a pair of sandals that I found by the bed, I flung on a long kimono over my night dress, and, gathering it about me, I stumbled out through the kitchen, along the bit of walk now screened from the street by Snowball's washing, and into the study.

I had to hold onto things a lot; but at last, unseen, I came to the steps that I had once before found insurmountable. There I knelt in a perfect agony of dread and fear till the music suddenly ceased and I heard Israfil give a startled cry. In an instant his arms were about me and he was endeavoring to raise me.

"Lenore! Darling! What is it?" he cried when he saw my face.

"Put me down, Israfil!" I said; and my voice scared me, for it didn't sound a bit like mine. I struggled out of his arms down on the step again. The kimono fell back and he wrapped it

about me, looking mighty scared, for he thought I was wandering in my mind; but I wasn't; I was perfectly sane for the first time since I knew him, I guess.

"Oh, Israfil! I've got something awful to tell you," I moaned.

"Nothing so *very* awful, little girl," he said soothingly, kneeling and putting his arms about me; but I pushed him away.

"No, I can't tell you so!" I cried. "Stand up on the altar where you belong, Israfil!"

"Yes."

"That girl he told you about—"

"Your sister?"

"Yes; but, Israfil, there isn't any sister."

"She's dead?" he asked, laying his hand on my head. I shook it off.

"Oh, I wish she was!" I wailed.

"But there never was any. I'm she!"

Still he didn't seem to understand, and when I stole a glance at him he looked awful worried and undecided. Again he leaned over me and attempted to take me in his arms.

"Darling, let me carry you home to your warm little bed?" he said coaxingly, as he would to an obstinate child. "See, you are shivering." Again he drew the kimono over my bare neck and arms, prude that he was, as though clothes mattered at such a moment.

"Israfil!" I cried despairingly, pushing away his clinging hands, "stand up on your altar and listen! The story that Blakely told you was true, and I was the girl! I never had a sister!" There, I thought, with a certain relief, that's plain enough; an idiot could not misunderstand that.

I was glad it was over; but as I thought of what it meant to him I was never so ashamed in my life. I felt the scorching, burning red spread over my face and neck, and I was sizzling hot instead of shivering. Oh, I wished he would speak! I wouldn't care if he raved and called me every vile name he could think of. Anything was better than this. When he ran out I could probably add a few very effective ones that he'd never heard of. Oh,

this was awful! I couldn't even hear him breathe. He was letting the terrible truth sink into his soul, searing and scarring as it went. He would loathe me, of course; I did myself. But, wouldn't he begin to feel sorry for the poor sinful but repentant creature kneeling at his feet, and remember the words of his Master about casting the first stone? Please God, I'd soon feel his arms about me; he'd tell me I was forgiven; and with a long life of service and expiation before me—

I could bear the silence no longer, and raised my head. Israfil was standing before me, straight and rigid, his clenched hands at his sides. All the boyish happiness was gone from his face, leaving it cold and stern; and the light of the zealot, the martyr at the stake, shone in his eyes. I needed no words to tell me that I had lost the man I loved—the man who had loved me. A great, despairing, heartbroken cry, "Israfil! Oh, Israfil!" echoed through the church—then oblivion. The sun had gone down forever.

"Yes," Aunt Martha went on monotonously, "he had long felt a call to go to the heathen parts as a missionary. He thought he was not doing the Lord's work here, surrounded as he was with material comforts." She wiped her eyes furtively, and droned on.

I guess I sort of dozed, for the next I heard was:

"He had pledged himself to a life of celibacy, and that day you had that quarrel, or misunderstanding, in the church"—she looked at me keenly, but I was again counting the roses in the wallpaper—"he said his contemplated marriage was all a mistake, and he had just time to catch the steamer. He said I was to love and cherish you all your life—"

"All my life!" I heard no more. "All my life!" That didn't mean much, for I was hugging a secret to my heart. In a day or two they would find it necessary to take me back to the hospital and Anne; and the doctors there had told me that if I ever had to come back . . .

A VALENTINE OF OLD MANHATTAN

By CLINTON SCOLLARD

LONG ago, long ago, on a morningtide merry,
Along Canal street when it had a canal,
There tripped a fair maiden adown to the ferry;
And oh, but her lips had the hue of the cherry!
And ah, but her eyes were as brown as a berry!
And dainty her gown was with frill and fal-lal.

Long ago, long ago, on this morningtide merry,
The air was like wine, and the sun was a-shine;
There was a gay gallant strode up from the ferry,
And oh, but his mien, it was debonair—very!
And the tune on his lips, it was "Derry, Down Derry!"
A ditty to Cupid and Saint Valentine.

Enamored were they on that morningtide merry
Of life and of love, both the man and the maid.
Said she—"Prithee tell me the way to the ferry!"
Said he—"I will show thee—be happy to—very!"
And ah, how her eyes that were brown as a berry
Made his heart beat as fast as a drum at parade!

And Cupid walked with them, that morningtide merry—
The air was like wine, and the sun was a-shine—
The maiden whose lips had the hue of a cherry,
And the gallant whose bearing was debonair—very
Till both had let slip every thought of the ferry.
Sing hey and sing ho, then, for Saint Valentine!

And so we will leave them, this morningtide merry
(Ah, bright as a rainbow the path that they trod!)
In their dream-happy search for Love's fortunate ferry
The maiden whose eyes were as brown as a berry,
And the youth whose demeanor was debonair—very—
Enmeshed in the toils of the saint and the god.

LAST year's passion is much less becoming even than last year's fashion.
We rarely shake out the folds of an old love and say, "How well I looked
in that!"

THE WHISPER

By ALISON M. LEDERER

JAMIE MAC MORINE was known in his wide circle of friends, and in his still wider circle of acquaintances, as the most level headed man of his years. His extraction fairly bristled out all over. He had the magnificent physique of the tall Scotchman, and the deliberate courage. His calm, dispassionate manner of speech, often painfully slow, had a tremendous emphasis in it, so that a man would not contradict him lightly. He was of few words, never speaking until he had thought leisurely; and somehow people always waited for him. It was the combination of these traits that made his immediate success as a lawyer, in spite of his total lack of imagination; it would seem almost that the utter absence of that faculty only served to strengthen his grasp and power in dealing with men and situations. A conception which might come to another as an inspiration, Jamie was certain of reaching as a conclusion; possibly it took him a little longer, but he never had the least doubt of his position.

The whole Jamie was not over thirty-two. His adoption of this country was no inspiration; he only gravely approved when his father took him out of the University of Edinburgh, and settled in New York, where his American mining interests demanded continual and personal attention. Here Jamie pursued his study of the law and was promptly located for his apprenticeship with one of the giants of modern legal enterprise. It was not long before Jamie set up the firm, MacMorine & Trompowsky, with a scrawny, swarthy little law clerk, who

wore his short, scrubby black hair straight on end and a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles, a sallow student and a dreamer, the very antithesis of Jamie, as a partner. The firm of MacMorine & Trompowsky had every element of success in its component members, and through the influence of MacMorine, senior, soon rolled up a large and lucrative practice.

When Jamie was thirty he took his father into his confidence and married. It was Jamie's deliberate way, and besides he knew how it would simplify matters with Amy Yeovil's people; for winning the consent of the proudest aristocrat of them all, old Yeovil, did not in the least appeal to him as it might have to a man of imagination; and such a thing as a runaway match he knew would have been little short of ridiculous with unromantic Jamie as the hero. Not that Jamie's love for Amy Yeovil was not one of the great forces of his life. For love is an instinct, and instinct is a thing quite apart from either romance or imagination, and Jamie's instincts were as powerful as becomes a powerful man.

To Amy Yeovil, or "Mrs. Jamie," as everyone now called her, Jamie was a god. The hearty, healthy big fellow had fairly swept her off her little feet. There was something original about Jamie's courtship. When he took her hand in his it seemed to be somehow in spite of himself, and he was awkward and a little ashamed, and all this made it none the less flattering. It was as though he had said:

"See what a fool love of this woman is making of me."

And Amy was barely twenty-one.

For the moment, she quite forgot all about a little fellow of the name of Ralph Jeyssset, upon whose account she had given her father much concern for the past two years. Jeyssset was an odd chap. He might have been a painter or a musician, or, best of all, a poet. He was intensely clever, with a strain of shyness, due to a bit of the real artistic temperament. As it was, he became a broker, dealing in outside securities on the Curb. He always deplored a sad fate which required his earning a livelihood; not that he had any serious intention of seeking to give expression to his talents otherwise than in conversation. Writing out a stanza of verse would have been quite as irksome to him as was buying or selling a block of stocks. He longed merely to live; or scarcely even that: rather to talk about living. Coming of excellent antecedents, he had been thrown much with Amy Yeovil; and when she was nineteen he began paying her an extravagant courtship. He had just caught the girl growing into womanhood, and his sentiment had called forth a flood of sentimentality. She was quite convinced she would some day be his, and he swore that he should never love any other. But then Jamie came into her life, and she felt her conviction totter. At their first meeting, at the Golf Club, where he was holing out an invitation match in wonderful form, she felt the mastery of the big fellow, felt his force over men and power to control events. Then an acquaintance presented them. From the first, she knew he could make her do his will in anything; not by struggle and constraint, but somehow his will became her will. This was her way of putting it—and on his next visit she told him; of course, what it really meant was very clear. She confessed, further, that in some strange, unaccountable way she was compelled to tell him everything. It was as though they were father and child, the girl said. Jamie's visits became more frequent, as the summer wore on. And finally the time came when, after days of heaven and nights of agony, she made up her

mind that she owed it to little Ralph to tell him all.

It was a breathless evening in Indian summer, and the moon was big and round and silent. Jamie had paid his last visit of the season. In another week the Yeovils were to reopen their town house. Ralph was on the veranda, speaking little. It seemed almost as though he knew, or at least had a presentiment. "Now!" she was saying to herself, "Now—now!" She thought she was the most miserable of women. For she was profoundly sorry for the little fellow; she knew what it would mean to him, and she thought she had once loved him. But love? It had never been anything like this.

"Ralph," she began.

"Don't, don't, Amy. Don't talk!" he whispered. "The stillness of this night is sacred. We mustn't break it. Just to sit here with you—" and he brought his hands down on the arms of his rocker and threw his face back in the blue moonlight.

For a moment she obeyed him; she allowed herself to drift into the past for that moment—their past. Then she sighed and brought herself back to the present with a painful twist. "Ralph," she began again, "you must listen to me. I've something—it's very hard. Help me, Ralph. Make it easier for both of us."

He brought his hands down on the arms of his rocker again, leaned far forward and swept her face with his searching, emotional eyes. "It's this damned Scotchman, Mr. MacMoline—I beg your pardon," then he added.

"Jamie!" was all she said.

For long there was a silence. He began to rock, slowly at first, then more and more furiously.

Then the little fellow sprang up and was rattling on in a manner that would have been theatrical and ridiculous in one not so terribly in earnest. He began to pace to and fro, as he poured out his impassioned words.

"It isn't so! It isn't so, I tell you. It is your fault. You know—"

She interrupted him with a bold show of indignation. "Do you mean

that I have encouraged you—that I have been leading you on? For if you do—”

Ralph let her come to a pause in her broken sentence. He knew she could not finish it or, at best, would end it weakly. Then he turned upon her coldly and very effectively. “Don’t be vulgar, Amy.” After a silence, during which he walked nervously up and down the veranda, patting one hand with the other, he stopped in a spot clear of the vines and looked for a long moment at the hunter’s moon. Then he turned to her again. His voice had sunk once more to the caressing tones of sentiment. It was a wonderful voice at this pitch, and almost sang as it sank to little above a whisper. “Amy,” he said. But she, too, was now looking at the hunter’s moon. “Amy,” he said again. And he dropped into the rocker close beside hers. “Amy,” and he placed his hand over hers, which rested on the arm of her chair. His was hot and quivering with emotion. After a moment she withdrew hers with a start, as though she had just become aware. He profited by her attention. “Amy!” he pursued, and his whole intense little soul was in his words. “How can all our love go out like this before—a man like that? Our love was real love; this, this is imagination.”

Slowly she leaned nearer to him. This time she placed her hand on his. The moment was intense to snapping for him. Then she spoke, gently, oh, so gently; but cold finality was in her words. “No, Ralph, that was imagination; this is real love. I can’t doubt any longer—poor boy!” she added. “Poor boy! You are still imagining that you love me, aren’t you?”

He seized her hand in both of his, and held it hysterically. “No! No! It isn’t imagination with me. I can prove that, at least. And I will. You shall see.” He drew her hand closer to himself by main force. “Will you give me a chance? Will you? Will you try—?”

The answer was prompt and unmistakably final. “It’s no use, Ralph.

I know that I never did, that I never can, love you. I see it all so clearly now.”

He dropped her hand. He rose and passed his hand over his brow. Then he thrust both hands deep into his pockets. “Good night,” was all he said. He walked to the veranda steps.

Amy called him back. “Ralph.” He stopped. “What are you going to do?” she asked, shuddering.

“I don’t know,” he answered, as he passed down to the gravel path and away into the blue night.

The following spring Amy Yeovil, with much pomp and ceremony, became Mrs. MacMoline—“Mrs. Jamie.” Ralph attended the wedding.

CHAPTER TWO

Two years had passed over Jamie’s married life. He had gone from success to success, without surprise to anyone, and least of all to himself. Mrs. Jamie still regarded him as a god—only—a god whom she knew much better, for familiarity did not rub off any of the admiration. She frankly believed there was nothing impossible for him.

He had made her share in his sports, until she became thoroughly ashamed to be anything but a good horsewoman, a fair sailor and proficient enough at golf to permit the Jamies to go about winning mixed foursomes at all the links. He never, or rarely, brought his professional cares home for her to share; those he locked in the top drawer of his desk when he swept into it the litter of blue-backed papers before leaving the office. It was his theory that a woman should be quite independent in her own sphere. He always looked a little askance at the clinging sort. So he laughed good-naturedly but firmly when she came to him at first with all the petty worries and responsibilities which loom so big in the feminine perspective. And under his training Mrs. Jamie was learning her lesson of womanly self-reliance and growing out of her girlish impulsiveness. Part of

his catechism was that romance ends with the honeymoon. Husband and wife are husband and wife, not lovers. Not that the whole system of married life could subsist except upon love as a basis; only, that this sort of love was a different and a finer thing than the whispering, moonlight, feverish sentiment of courtship. And so truly did Jamie MacMoline love his wife with this new and large and wholesome love of his that she did not miss being crooned over; so tenderly did he minister to her real comfort and happiness that she had not opportunity to miss a catering to her old craving for sentiment. Romance ends with the honeymoon, where the new love, the real love, begins.

Jamie built a villa down the Jersey coast, among the social set where he had found his wife. Nothing like a sentimental consideration induced him. It would be pleasant for Amy to be among the friends of her girlhood during the summer when he ran in and out of town every day. And finally, the shore was very comfortable and agreed with their health. Jamie's villa was not as stupendous and elaborate as the Italian palaces of the aged financiers who were still piling millions upon millions in Wall Street. But it was in perfect taste. It was a Roman villa, all white and cool, rising out of the fresh green hedges and dark foliage, with the blue sea stretching away for a background. Its court and garden with the fountain, inclosed on three sides, were toward the sea: toward the west it presented a severe square front reached by a sharp bluestone drive, winding up a rolling terrace of well-cropped lawn. The center wing of the building could be thrown open to the four winds of the compass; and, looking through from the carriage step, on the land side, you caught the polished floor of the combined entrance hall and living room in the foreground and, beyond, the garden with its lazy fountain and benches of white stone under the green trees, and beyond that the sea, stretching away and away to the horizon and Portugal beyond.

It was an extraordinary thing when

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Mrs. Jamie received a dispatch one August afternoon that Jamie would not be down that night: urgent business detained him in town. It was a thing which had never happened before. Of course, she had no reason to be nervous; only, she was a little lonesome already, although it was two hours before his accustomed train. She was thinking of the house, occupied only by herself and the servants. Then she began to wonder where Jamie would stop for the night in town—at a hotel or at his club. She knew Jamie would be lonesome, too; and gradually a silly fancy grew into a conviction that he would change his mind and come down, after all, or at least, wire again. This made for suspense. She worked herself into an expectant state of mind. By five o'clock she felt she must have someone to talk to, so she went to the telephone.

"Hello! Central, give me 318 J. Yes, J.—Busy? Oh, do try to get them for me. You know— Hello, is this 318 J?—Mrs. Jeyssset's?—Will you be so good as to ask Miss Jeyssset to come to the 'phone? This is Mrs. MacMoline—yes, Amy. Who are you?—Oh, Ralph! What are you doing down here at this time of day?—Taking a day off? Working so hard, you poor boy! Loafer! But where's Birdie?—Driving with Viola Whyman? When do you expect her in?—Why, yes, you may give her this message for me. Tell her she's got to come and dine and spend the night with me. And I positively won't take no for an answer. Tell her that she must. If she loves me—if she only knew— What's that?—Oh, Jamie? Well, Jamie won't be down tonight—detained in town on some awful business, he wires—What's that?—I think you're horrid, Ralph!—No, of course, I know. Well, you'll give her my message as soon as she comes in?—No, no, don't cut me off, Central. Hello! Is that you, Ralph? Well, Ralph, you'd better bring her over and stay to dinner yourself—You will? We dine at seven. Shall I send the carriage for you?—Just as you say. But you'd better let me. The weather looks a

little threatening, and besides, it hasn't got to meet the six-eighths this evening for Jamie—What's that? You wretch! I declare I won't allow you to talk so. I'm sorry I've invited you. So, now, there—Oh, but you will. You *must* come. I shall expect you—Dinner at seven, and Birdie is to stay with me all night. I guess I can tog her out; I have a pair of—What's that? Incurable boy! Don't you see my blushes through the 'phone?—No, there's no need of that. Birdie and I shall be perfectly safe. But I expect you for dinner. Good-bye."

"The little fool! He hasn't forgotten yet, or else—I'm half sorry I asked him," she said to herself, as she rang to give her orders to the butler.

After dinner, they sat at the south-west corner. The air was from inland. Mrs. Jamie had coffee served on a little round, white table on the veranda. Ralph had lighted his cigarette. It was a tiny red speck in the soft, dark blue landscape before her eyes. For Ralph sat just opposite. Soon the moon began to climb up out of the ocean and shone on his face. He felt her eyes upon him; he liked her silence. Even the chattering Birdie was awed somehow by the mystery of the autumn night. Then the long muffled whistle of an approaching train sounded in the distance. Mrs. Jamie shuddered: she remembered that she had not received that second wire from her husband. It came home to her with peculiar force. She shuddered again. Birdie sniffed and disappeared in search of a wrap. She refused her brother's mumbled offer of politeness. Mrs. Jamie and Ralph were alone. He leaned forward over the little white table. Instinctively she withdrew the hand which rested on the rim.

"Amy," he said in his soft accent, "Amy, may I stay out tomorrow?"

"Why do you ask me, Ralph?" she replied.

"Because, Amy, I want to spend it with you."

She tried to be curt. "I don't know what you mean."

"Mean?—mean?" he pursued, his

tones rising with the emotion. "Oh, you know what I mean, Amy! One of our old days together—that's all. There's no harm in that surely. Answer me. Will you, Amy?"

But her silence did not mean what he thought it did. She was thinking of the possibility of Jamie's coming by the last train, after all. Now she repeated the word after him drowsily: "Harm? Why, no, of course not. But you'd bore me horribly for a whole day, Ralph."

"I didn't, then," he replied, "in the old days."

"No, but that was in the old days; things are different. How could all that amuse me now? No. That's dead. Let's not resurrect it."

"It never has been buried," he whispered; and there was that in his voice which should not have been there.

"No, Ralph, I'm changed. That means nothing to me now." She interrupted his interruption. "If you're a real good boy you may drop in for a cup of tea with me on Friday afternoon, day after tomorrow."

"Amy!" And he arose and came round the table.

"Stop, Ralph," she said simply. She felt herself mistress of the situation—perhaps a little because she heard Birdie's footstep around the corner of the veranda.

"Really, if you don't act more sensibly, Ralph, I won't see you at all."

He reached hotly after her hand. But just then Birdie turned the corner. He checked himself. She looked at her brother, a little puzzled.

Mrs. Jamie took the extended hand and gave it a clasp. Then she looked over her shoulder at Birdie. "Ralph says he must leave us now. He is going to take an early train to town in the morning." And she released his hand in such a manner that there was nothing for him to do but kiss his sister good night and pass down to the blue-stone drive in the moonlight.

CHAPTER THREE

It was Friday afternoon, two days later. Mrs. Jamie kept Ralph waiting

rather pointedly before she tripped down the broad staircase into the hall. She wore a white waist and short, white flannel skirt. Ralph was struck by the air of youthfulness about this married woman when he rose from his chair beside the center table. Instead of shaking her proffered hand, he seized it eagerly in both of his and was carrying it to his lips. She wrenched it away. "Don't. Don't do that. You mustn't."

"Amy," he returned, pleading, "not even that? Why, what does that amount to?"

She looked down at her hands, which were working nervously. "That's precisely it. It mightn't mean anything with anyone else—but you mustn't." He was enjoying what he chose to regard as the subtle compliment. She stood in the doorway toward the west. "I don't think it's going to rain this afternoon, Ralph. We'll go over to the Golf Club."

But he remonstrated. He was still beside the table, and he stretched out one hand toward her. "Please," he concluded.

"Oh! but I'm so nervous. I've simply got to do something. And what can we do here?" she ran on.

"We can talk," he suggested. Then he asked, after a moment, looking at her closely: "Have you heard further from MacMorine—Jamie, your husband?"

"He wasn't out last night either, you know? I suppose you noticed he wasn't on the train? Well, he wired that he wasn't coming—just a word to say that the business isn't finished, and he can't get away, even at night. I hope he'll be down, as usual, this evening—six-eighteen." The tone of frank unhappiness was childlike.

He started toward her, and his lips were forming themselves to say something. But she noticed only his approach and added laughingly: "You must be good to me, Ralph."

"But not the Club," was all he said. "Let's have a bit of tea and a chat on the veranda, and then we'll come in here to the piano."

She allowed him to go ahead, and followed lingeringly. With the tea, they talked of books. And finally, when she asked him the time, and it was nearly five, she jumped up with an evident recurrence of her nervousness and cried: "Let's try music, now."

He sat on the piano bench beside her while she ran through a *Prélude* of Chopin hurriedly. They were both excellent musicians, but she was simply scampering through the composition. Her thoughts were manifestly elsewhere.

"I wonder whether you could put any feeling into the 'Funeral March?'" he asked, when she had finished and looked over her shoulder at the marble clock on the mantel. The chimes struck five. She was about to rise from the piano, without any definite object, when his fingers dropped on the keys, and fell into the bass of a duet they used to play in the old days. She sat still and listened to the introductory bars. Then she turned her eyes upon him steadily. He felt them, but did not look up from the keys. He knew she would look away. He ran through those first few bars over again. She smiled, a little sadly, but with more contentment than she had shown throughout the afternoon.

"Do you think we could?" she asked. "I haven't played it since"; and there was almost a challenge in the emphasis.

"Neither have I" he answered, without looking up; "but I can never forget it."

For answer she joined him in the duet, and they played it through with remarkable smoothness. Then they played it again. And so they drifted into other duets which they had learned together and played in the days before there ever was such a man as Jamie for either of them. There was a particular pleasure, all the pleasure of reminiscence and memories of by-gones, in the music. They scarcely spoke a word, except occasional direction; the music was speaking for them. It was saying what he wanted to say, and

what she felt just a little in spite of herself.

Amy went white and then scarlet when the butler handed her a telegram. Ralph arose from the piano and sauntered over to the center table, where he began playing with a heavy brass paper cutter with an air of insolence. Amy ripped the envelope and dismissed the butler curtly with: "No answer, Richards." Pain was evidently giving way to annoyance—at Jamie, at herself—but most of all at the man before her. Ralph made no move; he continued to play with the paper cutter. The situation was becoming more tense momentarily for Amy. She re-read the telegram. Then she turned and cleared her throat. "It's from him," she said shortly. To her surprise Ralph merely nodded. "Well?" she asked. He understood only in a general way that something was expected of him. Therefore he simply answered, "Yes." He foresaw tears and possibly hysterics, but he was taken altogether unawares when she stamped her foot and then rushed to him, and, burying her face on his shoulder, sobbed and cried out like a child. "Oh, Ralph, Ralph, you must help me! I need you now. I know I'm a little fool, but I'm so nervous I simply can't stand this any longer. Why doesn't he write me something more than this continual 'Detained on very important business. Not a moment to myself'? Day after day, only the same telegram. My God! Can it be that something has happened to him, and they are keeping it from me? Ralph, Ralph, speak to me! You must be my friend. You must help me."

His arms were about her shoulders, and he was patting her gently. His words were not entirely reassuring. "Amy, it's nothing of that sort. You may take my word for it."

She raised her tear-stained face from his shoulder and looked eagerly into his eyes. "You know something; you are not telling me the whole truth. Ralph, you must!"

For a moment he hesitated. "I know nothing," he said "except—that

I adore you!" and he made to kiss her lips. Like a flash she swerved, and only her fragrant hair brushed his lips.

"Amy," he cried again, as she disengaged herself altogether from his arms.

"You see I can't trust you, Ralph."

Her voice was quite steady and calm. "And I did so need a good friend, then. But you see I can't trust you—it was weak and silly of me. I'm better now. I'm quite ashamed of myself. Shame, and disappointment that he isn't coming—that's all I feel now." She was speaking as she walked about, using her handkerchief and smoothing up her hair. She took down the receiver of the telephone and called 318 J.

"What are you going to do?" he asked.

"I'm going to get Birdie over to dinner with us."

"You see, there is something else that you feel. You're afraid of me, and of yourself," he said boldly.

"Afraid!" she echoed, laughing.

"Afraid? Indeed I'm not. It was my fault that time. I forgive you, Ralph." Then into the telephone: "Oh, is this you, Birdie? Well, you're to dine with us. Ralph is here. Jamie? I've had another wire; he won't be down tonight. Hurry over. There's a good girl."

At dinner, it was evident that little Birdie was big with something of importance that she could scarcely contain. She was continually looking at Richards, the butler, as though she wished him out of the way. At length, when the coffee and liqueur were served, and cigarettes and cigars were set before Ralph, and Richards had withdrawn, she leaned across the table impressively and asked her brother bluntly: "Have you told her?"

Mrs. Jamie looked from one to the other. Birdie's face was a study of excited anticipation. Ralph seemed to be annoyed, as he asked his sister, "What?"

"Why, what they're all saying at the Golf Club and everywhere. I think Amy should be told. It's no more than right, Ralph," she went on.

Then Mrs. Jamie took a hand. She

was no longer a child; she was a woman, a matron. "What is all this? If it concerns me in any way I must insist upon knowing." And she looked at Ralph.

"Oh, the whisper?" he replied uncomfortably. "I don't think it's worth while worrying you with that, Amy; it's only a whisper."

"What is whispered?" asked Mrs. Jamie steadily and with determination. "Come, I insist upon knowing. What are people saying about me?"

Ralph answered slowly and with a show of reluctance. "I really wouldn't pay any attention to it, Amy. They are saying cruel things about your husband—about Jamie. I wouldn't pay any attention, though, Amy."

"Go on," she said earnestly.

Ralph crushed his cigarette end and selected and lighted a cigar before he continued. "They are saying that your husband has been entertaining some men from the West at his club every evening. They sit at the card table for hours in shirt sleeves; and fortunes are won and lost. The smoke and spirit laden atmosphere is full of coarseness which makes the very waiters look at one another sheepishly. Two or three of the party are carried upstairs every night and put to bed. But their host is always among those who take the cabs that are waiting before the door and drive down town in the small hours of morning. What time, if at all, they return isn't part of the story."

He stopped. Birdie was leaning over the table. Ralph took a fresh light for his cigar. Mrs. Jamie passed her hand across her brow. She was thinking. And is this what keeps him from me, from even writing me, from more than a wire? Is this the important business? "Oh, God!" she said, aloud.

"I'm sorry for you," said Birdie.

"Is—is that all?" asked the wife, at length.

"That's the whisper," said Ralph.

"They're all talking of it," added Birdie. "And they're all so sorry for you."

"They needn't be sorry," said Mrs.

Jamie. "I don't want their sympathy. I don't need it." And then, after a pause, she turned to Ralph in a fond, thankful tone. "And you didn't tell me all this before because you knew it would pain me? You spared me. And this is why you wouldn't let me go to the Golf Club this afternoon? You wanted to save me the humiliation of being pitied? That was noble of you, Ralph. That was more than I expected of you. Forgive me if I have been horrid to you. You will—won't you?" And she closed her hand over his on the table. His chin fell upon his bosom. He was silent.

When Birdie offered to stay the night with Mrs. Jamie she was met with a decisive, "No, thank you, dear. I must be alone. I want to be alone. I must think this over. I must have time, lots of time. I don't think I shall pay any attention to this whisper. It seems to be anonymous, quite gratuitous. Nobody is cited as authority, as Jamie would say. And, besides, what does it amount to? Ah, Jamie!"

"But, Ralph himself—" began Birdie. She stopped when she caught her brother's eye. "I guess we'll leave you early, in that case, Amy dear."

"Yes, I shall want to be alone. I want to think it all out by myself. You'll excuse me early, won't you, friends?"

CHAPTER FOUR

It was one of those gorgeous autumn nights of the coast. The languid heat of summer was past, and the equinoctial winds had carried away the storms and bitterness of the coming of fall. The atmosphere was exhilarating, without chill.

Mrs. Jamie sat late, after her guests had gone, on the veranda toward the Roman garden and the sea. She had determined to think out the whole of this distressing matter, just as Jamie had taught her to think things out. But somehow she could not think at all; she only dreamed emotionally of Jamie. And this fortified her original

determination, adopted at first with none too strong a heart, not to doubt her husband. Her mind swung about in circles, always recurring to this conclusion. Jamie had never been much of a card player. But who were those dreadful creatures from the West, and what might not their influence lead to? And then she laughed at herself. The idea of Jamie being led—Jamie, a leader of men! But those cabs, those mysterious cabs down town, and their mysterious inferences were disquieting.

She started at a heavy footfall coming around the veranda. Then she waited, fancying fond dreams. It was only Richards, closing the shutters. She turned about and told him that he might leave the French window from the hall open, as she would sit out somewhat longer. Her voice had in it all the kindness of the very sad. Richards reappeared after a moment with a blanket golf cape and laid it on the chair beside her. "The air is coming up a bit sharp, madame, and it's growing late," he explained.

"Late?" she asked, absently, as she slipped her shoulders into the cape.

"Quarter after eleven, madame," replied the butler.

"Oh, no one need wait up for me, Richards," she concluded. "Tell Snead she may go to bed; I'll manage."

Mrs. Jamie was once more alone. She conscientiously strove to bring her mind down to the matter. What did all this talk amount to, after all? Nothing definite was being said. They were just talking; they had to talk about somebody, and they had seized upon this story about her Jamie, originated heaven knew how. Her Jamie! And then the next moment she felt this to be a step toward the culmination of all her pique and anxiety of the last few days of his unusual absence, so flimsily explained by the telegrams.

She began to be aware of a touch of chill night air coming up from the sea. So she arose, and, drawing her cape close at the throat, stepped down from the veranda into the garden. The moon had not been up long and was

still upon the ocean. Her mood suggested a walk to the bluff overlooking the beach. She was just a tiny bit ashamed of this mood; she knew how Jamie would have laughed at it. But the mood was irresistible, and won, and even made her resent Jamie's interference.

She had not walked far down the main white gravel path when she stopped at what she fancied was a footfall somewhere off to the right, beyond the thick cluster of young evergreens. For a moment she thought of the French window on the veranda which she had left open. The servants must all have retired. She hesitated whether to go back. Everything was still now, as she listened, except the booming of the surf on the sand. Then, of a sudden, a man's singing voice arose, low and well modulated, just the other side of the shrubbery. She recognized it instantly as Ralph's, even before she caught the measure of the duet they had been playing together in the afternoon.

There was a bit of a flutter and she wished she had not come down into the garden. Somehow it never occurred to her that he had no business there. She felt as though she had come into his garden. Flight was impossible. The thought of him was not unpleasing to her. And yet she had rather not meet him, a thousand times rather. As he appeared around the black dwarf fir-tree, they were face to face. He took off his hat in a dignified manner, and kept it off. He was genuinely surprised. His singing voice died softly on the note and ran almost without change into a low exclamation of her name: "Amy! You!"

She seemed to feel the need of explanation. "I—just wandered down here to have a look at the sea. I was restless, thinking—"

He was quick to interrupt. "Don't think, Amy. Why think—" But he left his sentence unfinished, and taking her arm began walking slowly down the path toward the bluff. "Let me wander with you." She was about to speak when he interrupted her. "What brought me here into your garden?"

You. I came just to be near you a little longer. No, I shouldn't have made a sign. I should have sat on one of these benches thinking—"

"I owe you something, Ralph—much, for your forbearance and regard for my feelings in this horrible business," she said weakly. "You have been sparing me. You have been protecting me."

"Let us not think of that," he said, slipping her arm closer into his. "Let us think only of ourselves and tonight."

They had passed the last of the dense shrubbery and stood on the bluff overlooking the sea, which was a mass of liquid silver, rolling always southward under a steady autumn moon.

"Amy," he continued, after a pause, "Amy, can there be anything so pathetic, so utterly terrible as my love?"

She disengaged herself and, throwing both her arms over his shoulders, looked deep into his eyes and spoke more directly than before. "Oh, Ralph, why couldn't you fall in love with some one of these girls and marry her and make her and yourself happy? Why must you come to a poor old young woman like myself with all the beauty of your love, when it cannot be returned, where you can make only sadness for both of us?"

"Must it be so, Amy?" he answered simply.

"What else?" she asked, sadly. "I'm so sorry for you, Ralph. Why can't you forget me?"

"Never that!" he cried impetuously. "Never that! I had rather go on loving you thus than win the favor of requited love of another woman."

"Isn't it a little silly of you? I have nothing to give you for it, absolutely nothing. Poor boy!— But you have asked for nothing. You can ask nothing of me." She stopped, regretting a little the opening she gave him.

"I could ask something of you—if you cared. I should ask something. It would be my duty—if you cared," he said sadly in a tone that compelled her to follow him.

"If I cared—what then?"

"If you, cared Amy— Oh, but why why torture me?" he cried.

"Yes, if I cared—" And then she drew her cape closer about her shoulders and clung to his arm. "Ralph, let me be perfectly honest with you. I do care, more than I dared let you think. You were right: I have been afraid of you. But that isn't fair. I do care for you—a little—a great deal, especially of late, since—"

"Amy!" he cried, and folded his arms about her and drew her to him by force and spoke, looking into her eyes in the moonlight. "Amy! My Amy!"

"No, no," she protested a little feebly. "This isn't right."

"Right! Right or wrong! What are they? We—I adore you, and you care a little. Amy, come, come with me."

"Where?" she asked, as in a trance.

"Anywhere away from here. We'll walk along that moonbeam on the water. Away, away, away—across the ocean to Portugal beyond the sea. Any place where we can be alone and just live for each other."

"But Jamie, what of him?" she asked dreamily, indulging her imagination and romance for the moment to the full.

"My God, Amy, are you still thinking of him? If you had seen him as I saw him, last night!— That's why I said it was my duty—if you cared—"

"What do you mean?" she asked; and a new calm was in her voice, the calm of repressed emotion.

"Why—nothing, Amy. I wouldn't think of it any more."

But she pursued aggressively: "What do you mean, Ralph? Do you tell me that you saw Jamie in a condition he should be ashamed of? Or was it in company he wouldn't wish me to know of? Which? What? Tell me! I insist. I'm not a child. I'm a man's wife." She stood clear of him now, but hanging upon his reply.

It came slowly at length. "It was the latter—the company. He was all right."

"So—!" And she seemed to recoil from the little fellow, who stood with

arms outstretched, pleading and suffering. "So!—I don't know yet how I shall take this. I shall probably hate you for it; yes, hate you!" And she quivered on the word. "I don't know yet what I shall do. I don't know that I shall do anything— No! Don't tell me another word. I feel that it is contemptible of you to stand here tonight saying such things to me, and still more contemptible of me to listen to you."

"But, Amy, listen. You don't understand. I mean—"

"Hush! Not another word! I forbid it!— Don't go. Sit down here, I may need you. Wait. I must think. Let me alone."

He obeyed the young woman, who had risen to new heights in her imperious mood. She walked up and down the bluff, between him and the moonlit sea, like a spectre. He was afraid of her. He did not dare to break the silence.

At length she stopped before him. She was sharply silhouetted against the silver-blue background. Then her voice came low and clear. "Is there another train tonight?" He was too dumbfounded to answer; so she repeated her question: "Is there another train tonight?"

He could scarcely believe his ears. He arose and came toward her, slowly at first, and then more rapidly, with arms outstretched. "Amy!" he cried. "Amy! You will! You will!"

But she held him off with a gesture. "Answer me. Is there another train tonight?"

"Yes. At twelve thirty-two. You will go with me?" he cried.

"No. You must come with me. Telephone your sister, if you wish— anything. There's no time for further preparation. I'll order the station wagon."

"But where are you going, Amy?" he asked pathetically.

Mrs. Jamie laughed aloud hysterically. "Poor boy! And you are the man who proposed elopement five minutes ago! Why, I should have had to buy the tickets and check the lug-

gage and talk to the hotel clerks! Oh, it's so funny, Ralph."

"Amy! what are you going to do? Where are you going?" he repeated.

"We are going—we are going to the city, at once. I can't remain inactive another moment. I should die. I have had enough of this suspense. Then you are to see me safely to a hotel, and you can go to your club or anywhere you please. And in the morning you shall go with me to Jamie's office, and we shall have this out. And then—well, and then we shall see. God knows!" She sank upon the bench beside him.

"But this is madness, Amy!" he cried. "Wait until tomorrow."

"No. I can't. Go, at once." And she pushed him to his feet.

"But, Amy, think it over again. Just let me explain what I meant when I said—"

"Not another word!" she interrupted. "Not another word! Your explanations shall be to Jamie, in the morning, when he has explained to me. Now go—telephone that you sha'n't be home."

"But think, Amy, what will people say if we are seen?" he pleaded.

"There will be a whisper about me, too. They've been talking about Jamie. Let them talk about 'Mrs. Jamie,' as well. That's but right. But, perhaps you are afraid that they'll talk about you—" she added suddenly. "Oh, but you can't care, Ralph, for didn't you ask me to elope with you, a little while ago? So, you can't care. Really, I couldn't think of that. Even if I were inclined to leave Jamie for you, I wouldn't do it. The woman always gets the worst of it in such cases. She makes a fool of herself. On that night it's beautiful: there's something beautiful in her courage. But in broad sunlight, next day, she is such an unmitigated fool. Such an unmitigated fool, Ralph! Now, you wouldn't want to think of me as a fool, would you, and especially on your own hands? Now, go! go! go! There isn't a moment to lose. Go! not a word! Go!"

CHAPTER FIVE

IT was a little after nine, the next morning, when Jamie stepped off the train from New York. An elderly, over prosperous Irishman, gray, well dressed and too ruddy from good living, was with him. Colonel Richard O'Brien had been the first big client of the firm of MacMorine & Trompowsky. He was a friend of Jamie's father, and the leading spirit in most of those mining ventures. He had risen from a very small beginning, as secretary to a successful contractor, to a position of wealth and a sort of distinction in the class of bachelors who dine at the best restaurants and have standing orders for seats at every first night at the theaters. He had made himself, not by hard work, but by making opportunities for himself by making friends. He had a shrewd business sense which prompted him infallibly as to whether an enterprise held success or failure. He amused himself for the mere pleasure of it; but incidentally his little dinners and suppers after the play were often the occasion of the plan of some dreamer being taken up by a set of practical men with the sense and the means of making it come true. Colonel O'Brien had taken a tremendous fancy to Jamie MacMorine from the first, and brought the young firm into business relations with many others like himself, who required sound advice as to the means of attaining their end, and were ready to pay handsomely for it.

On the station platform was the usual crowd of men waiting for the nine twelve express to town, thinned a little because of the end of the season; but still there were many nods to Jamie. He did not notice that most of the nods were a trifle stiff. He was thinking of something else. Turning to Colonel O'Brien, who was carrying a Gladstone bag, he cried jovially: "We must take a hack. The wagon won't be here to meet us. They don't expect me. What a surprise for Amy! I wouldn't have wired and spoiled it for a farm."

"Very much of a married man, Jamie," O'Brien managed between

grunts, as he lifted his gouty leg into the surrey. "Very much of a married man, my boy. Why, I feared you were going to fling up the whole deal and leave me in the lurch and run home every evening—" Being comfortably disposed in the hack and whirling along in the face of the fresh autumn sea breeze, the genial Irishman rattled on to the young man at his side. "I really want to apologize, Jamie, for dragging you into this so headlong and monopolizing your time, night and day. Of course I could have got someone else to fix it up if you had kept your foot down. But, you'll believe me, I wanted to get you into it for your own sake. I scented success, and I wanted you to get a share of it with me. The deal will be a record breaker. Wall Street will sit up very straight when it gets wind. But the devil of it is you can't do anything with those chaps in business hours when they come East. They are twice as easy to handle in the evening. That club of yours was an inspiration of mine. Eh? Damned sorry, though, for your wife. I suppose it was beastly of me to keep you under my thumb, day and night. She'll probably run me out of the house this time, instead of greeting me as usual."

"Amy's a sensible little woman," said the other shortly, as they turned into the winding bluestone drive.

As the butler took O'Brien's bag, Jamie asked, "Is Mrs. MacMorine about yet, Richards?"

"No—not about, sir—not yet, sir," the butler managed to stammer.

Jamie was too high spirited to notice anything amiss. He simply shouted back: "Show Colonel O'Brien to his room, and see that he is waited on—bath, shave—then order breakfast," and disappeared into the hall, leaving his guest and the butler on the veranda. Then, as an afterthought, he bounded down again and added: "Richards, say nothing to Mrs. MacMorine; we'll surprise her at breakfast. I'll speak to her maid."

Poor Richards was fairly trembling with nervousness. The coachman had duly reported at the servants' breakfast

that he had driven Mrs. Jamie, and a young man who looked very much like Mr. Jeyssset—but he couldn't see his face—to the station a little after midnight. Snead had been ordered to pack a handbag; but she could elicit nothing but temper by her questions. With Richards thought came slowly; so he just led the guest to his room in silence.

Half an hour later Colonel O'Brien was rapping at Jamie's dressing room, clad in a long bath robe and slippers and looking very frightened. Much to his surprise he heard the gurgling of water running out of a bathtub and a loud "Who's there?" and the knob turned to his hand. He stood in the center of the dressing room, looking through an open door upon a fine pink specimen of manhood toweling himself vigorously.

"What's the matter?" greeted him in a tone that was more angry than anything else.

"I—I didn't think there was any harm coming through the halls like this," stammered O'Brien, looking down at his untidy, "since your wife is not—is not—"

"Not at home!" snapped Jamie, as he came through the doorway, like a Greek god.

O'Brien played with the tassel of his bath robe. "Then you know?" he asked, without looking up.

"Know what?" asked Jamie, getting into his fresh flannels.

"That your wife and a young cur named Jeyssset or other—"

"Stop!" cried Jamie. "Don't you dare say that—not even you, O'Brien!"

Colonel O'Brien sat down uneasily. "But there was something between them before you were married; and, my dear Jamie—"

"Careful!" exclaimed the other, slipping into a pair of pumps. "No man shall say a word against my wife without my having a try at knocking him down!"

"But, my dear Jamie, you must face the facts as they are," squirmed O'Brien, rubbing his stomach under the folds of the bath robe.

"That's precisely what I am doing.

'The facts as they are' is what I say, too—not an inch of fact and a mile of inference and imagination."

O'Brien had a fancy he was talking to a madman.

"You know they took the midnight train for New York, together?" he ventured.

"Certainly," returned Jamie. "And I'm sure I can explain it all to your satisfaction, O'Brien," caustically—"especially since it is all your fault."

"Oh, now, see here," protested O'Brien weakly.

"Yes, all your fault," repeated Jamie. "And it's only your usual good luck that—" But Jamie broke off his sentence and pressed the button of a call bell.

"Good luck?" echoed the man in the armchair.

"Yes, I'll explain that, too, when I've ordered coffee."

O'Brien passed the back of his hairy hand across his bald forehead. This was hardly the way he imagined a husband in Jamie's position should act. Again it came home to him forcibly that he was conversing with a madman.

"Now," said Jamie, after the coffee service had been laid and Richards had left the room, "excuse me for a minute while I use the telephone. No, sit still." He sat down at the extension wire and, looking over a directory, called for 318 J.

"Is this Mrs. Jeyssset's? Well, will you ask Miss Jeyssset to come to the 'phone?—Oh, this is Miss Jeyssset. I am Mr. MacMorine. Good morning—What's that? 'In a terrible state'? Yes. I know—Yes—Yes—Yes—Yes—But, my dear Miss Jeyssset, calm yourself. You see I am not 'in a terrible state,' and it's my wife—why, certainly I can understand it—I have been away for several days for the first time since we've been married, unexpectedly and without warning, detained in town, and—What's that? They have, have they—about me? And this rubbish has been told Amy? I suppose some—You did! Ah, well, now you can see it all just as clearly as I. The poor girl's nerves got the better

of her, and she has simply yielded to them and taken the first train to town. She may possibly have started right out to look me up at the club; but I hope by that time she had composed herself somewhat and waited until morning to find me at my office. Unfortunately, she will not find me in, since I came right down here after concluding the business last night—I will telephone my office within a few minutes—Why, of course that's how it is. No, no! don't! Try to compose your mother, and don't permit her to telephone to anyone. There is no occasion to speak of it at all—About myself? I'll take care of myself; and, after all, what difference does it make what they say, so long as Amy does not believe them?—Yes. I'll call you up as soon as I hear from her. I should think he might be able to take care of himself, too. Good-bye—I will. Good-bye."

Jamie hung up the receiver with a sigh of relief. Then he turned to O'Brien. The Irishman had found a cigarette and was venting his surprise in great puffs of smoke, which he blew from his mustache and nostrils.

"Now, you understand what I make of it—and that it's all your fault for almost literally seizing and binding me."

"But," began O'Brien.

"Oh, yes—'your usual good luck.'"

I promised to explain that, too. Well, it's your good luck that Amy is the best woman in the world, in these trying circumstances, so that I haven't the least apprehension for her, even with that little fool. O'Brien, that girl is an angel out of heaven!" he cried suddenly in a very different tone.

But a violent ringing of the telephone interrupted him.

"Yes—yes, I've been talking to 318 J Central—New York wants me?—Oh, this you, Colfax? Yes—Mrs. MacMorine? Show her into my office and close the door. Do you hear?—Yes, and close the door. Do you hear?—Yes, yes, yes, yes! I'm holding the wire."

Then he turned to the man in the armchair. "Now, O'Brien, you offered to leave the room a few moments ago. Close the door after you, like a good fellow. Thanks."

"Hello! hello! Amy! Amy! Is this you, little girl? Yes, yes, I'm Jamie.—Thank God!—No more of this nonsense about romance ending with the honeymoon for us!—Yes, child. Yes, yes, yes, of course I do! And do you?—I knew you would!—Yes, the next train. Let Colfax send for a cab for you. No! come back! Let me hear your voice again! Let me—let me—Amy! My heart!—the first train!"—

F A M E

By JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

ONE strove and fought unceasingly for Fame,
And at the end he died without a name.

Another for the laurel caring naught,
Achieved a Fame with bays undying fraught.

Fame hath a way—quite like a woman she!—
Of spurning those who woo too ardently.

No doubt she finds it pleasant to be wooed,
But would be tempted rather than pursued.

BETWEEN SIX AND SEVEN

By FREMONT RIDER

STILTON tried to interest himself in his work, but debenture bonds were just at present a nightmare to him, and the rattle of the typewriter in the outer office annoyed him so much that he was on the point of ordering it stopped, when visions of interrogations as to his sanity rose before him and he refrained. In self defense he seized his hat, signaled the first hansom he saw and promised the man ten dollars to catch the five thirty train.

They pulled up at the Grand Central Station at five twenty-nine, and Stilton, who wanted neither the five thirty nor any other train, calmly walked down Park Avenue, while the cabman fingered the crisp bill and stared after him in confused amazement.

By the time he had reached the hotel he had calmed down sufficiently to try a cigarette in the lobby and glance at the crowd that eddied by him. The rustle of silk, the subtle odor of perfume, the air of good breeding that was almost sensible in the atmosphere, the quiet but instantaneous service that surrounded him, never obtrusive, never wanting—all conduced to his self complacency. With leisure he found himself interested in watching the wheels of so much of the machinery of this service as the public were permitted to see—a bell here, a nod there, livery, uniform, noiseless, impassive discipline.

And those favored ones for whom all this army was marshaled—and who paid, and paid well for it. . . . Money?—of course. Breeding?—yes. Cosmopolitanism?—noticeably yes, from the round faced, bright gowned Ori-

ental diplomat yonder, to the two Frenchmen chattering near him with the peculiar b-r-r- of the Provençal.

Then he saw her.

It is hard for any man to live up to a reputation of being romantic; but Stilton had found less difficulty than most, nor were the millions with which his father had weighted him the only reason. So it is not surprising that in the concourse of the railroad station at Mainz, three weeks before, he had seen the one woman of his life. He had caught but a glimpse—ermine cloak, magnificent hair, glistening with drops of water. . . . It was raining, and she had not even seen him, to say nothing of their speaking. But neither that fact nor her social position as the scion of a royal house—which he had learned within an hour—had quenched in the slightest the ardor of his desire.

He knew the American Ambassador, and the magic name of his deceased father gained him a presentation at court. Within twenty-four hours—Stilton's defiant Americanism was the bane of his well meaning Anglo-American friends—he had made the girl's father, the proper channel as he understood the customs of the country, a definite financial proposition. But fortune did not smile, if papa did. An offer in millions did not tempt the Princess, and after a stormy interview between father and daughter, in which she told him that she would not be "sold"—her way of putting it—that she'd marry the man of her choice when she found him, though he didn't have a cent, she disappeared. Which action might have been an excellent means of cutting a Gordian knot, but

a true lover's knot is a different matter. The event left her father in a mental condition verging on insanity, composed of equal parts of injured family pride, chagrin, greed and anger, and Stilton loving her the more, and cursing his ill luck.

She was seen at Mannheim, the home of an old nurse with whom she had fled, and her father, not daring to invoke the aid of the regular police, had her watched as closely as he might and prevailed on Stilton to delay action for a time in the hope that she would return.

At this crisis the home stock market saw fit to turn one of its spectacular and uncalled-for handspings, and the various underpinnings of the great financial arch which his father had reared, and of which he was now supposed to be the keystone, called loudly for his immediate return. For a few days in Wall Street he had almost been able to forget, so keen had been the strain; but soon the relaxation came and he found himself with her face coming momentarily between him and all his world, cursing himself twenty times a day for his promise to her father, yet without any clear idea as to what he would have done if he had not promised. Though he cabled daily to Muenchen, there was no news; and his New York impatience at delay fretted and fumed with inaction. By day he planned for her and by night dreamed of her.

Then, as has been said, there, in the lobby of his hotel, he saw her.

At least he thought he did, the face of his dreams for weeks, and he started as if electrified, staring eagerly through the surrounding groups. But he caught the eyes of his neighbor fixed on him amusedly and dropped perforce into that cultivated indifference that is supposedly synonymous with the best breeding. Alone she had passed without seeing him. The sudden rush of realization left him almost weak, and he clenched the arms of his chair in self-castigation. He could not be mistaken; he had seen her fairly. As though she were not striking enough to

command attention in any assembly! Tall, fair, full-bosomed; a face at once naive and self-reliant; eyes at once tender and proud, but too deep to own any color.

Yet he could hardly realize that the Princess Hermine, whom he had left two weeks before in an alien land, was here now in his own hotel. He went to the information desk. "Is there a Princess Hermine registered?" There was not. Then he recalled that she might very well not be a guest. He felt suddenly like a drowning man, who, having clutched a preserver, had it wrenched from him.

But as he was turning away he had an inspiration. Yes, there was, he was told, a Mademoiselle Sclavieroff—her family name. He might have known she would travel incognito. "Leaves tomorrow," his informant added.

A little later, in the privacy of his own rooms, an unintelligible ill humor took definite, if transitory form. Henri, having brought slippers and coat, was requested in no uncertain language to betake himself to his own devices till the following day. Henri gone, Stilton dashed off the following:

To her Royal Highness the Princess Hermine.

Mademoiselle: Your father's agents are eagle-eyed and his arm far-reaching. If you value your freedom and your love, the retention of both await you only here. If you dare trust a stranger, if you dare over-tread convention, if finally you are not afraid, personally, you are earnestly entreated to come alone to Suite 2 C of this hotel at six, or as soon thereafter as possible.

He signed his middle name only—unknown to her—and gave it for delivery to the boy who answered his button. He realized that in so doing he had overstepped the bounds, had scorned the rules of the game we call society. Rules! he thought, as he sprang up and commenced to pace the room; the Princess was beyond all rules. He was fighting for his love, for his life; he could not do otherwise.

He snapped off the lights, and with no light but the open fire came the dreams again. He had been dreaming them for weeks, and here, unannounced

and almost unwelcome, had risen the reality to mock them. Already it was six. The Princess would come—he was sure of that—not from fear or curiosity, but merely to prove that courage that his note had artfully seemed to question.

He hastened to answer a gentle rap. "Won't you enter?" He stood somewhat in the shadow; and the Princess, after an invisible second of hesitation, swept into the room.

"You!" she cried, as Stilton, closing the door, turned so that the firelight fell full on his face. There was an intensity of scorn and anger before which he winced in spite of himself.

"I didn't know whether you would know me or not," he said.

"I did not think you would descend to a trick so base," she said, paying no attention to his remark.

Stilton remained calmly penitent. "You leave tomorrow," he said; "my desire to see you before you go is my only excuse for acting as I do."

"Your conduct is inexcusable," she said icily.

"Yes?" he queried naively, going to his fireside chair. "Won't you sit down?" he continued, with a courteous gesture.

She bit her lips, but took no notice of his invitation; they both remained standing.

"Why did you not send your card to my apartments, if you wished to see me?"

"Why did you fly from Hervegrad," he retorted, "without giving me a chance to speak?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "I am not used to answering questions," she said.

"But I am a Yankee," he replied, with a slight twinkle. "We answer with questions."

"I left Hervegrad because I hated you."

"And I did not send to your room because I knew you would have fled from me again."

She smiled, rather in spite of herself. "Shall I turn on more lights?" he asked suddenly.

"Your room is your own." Her tone made Stilton think again of liquid air in the Arctic. He leaned back; the lights remained out.

"Will you listen quietly till I have made you a proposition?" he queried.

"Why should I listen at all?"

"Out of curiosity, if for no other reason." She smiled again at that, but by the time he had turned, her face was impassive.

"My curiosity as to you is non-existent." No one could have questioned her absolute cool indifference as she moved toward the door. But Stilton was there before her. He locked it, put the key in his pocket, and stood with his back against it, facing her.

The Princess was superb in her anger. Stilton was white lipped but calm, and his voice was low and marvelously steady. "I regret being obliged to use force. But I must speak to you." At the words she flared into fury.

"I will not listen to you," she cried.

In her passion she had come within a few feet of him. So they faced each other, eye to eye—he cold and tall, she tall and magnificently angry—in a strained pause that lasted several seconds. When he spoke it was so quietly, so surely and slowly that each word stood by itself. "Yes—you—will," he said. Even while she gasped at the very audacity of it, her will wavered. She dropped into the chair by the door with a nervous little laugh.

"I will give you what you do not deserve," she said; "what have you to say?"

"Thank you," said Stilton simply. He unlocked the door just as a page knocked. With a "Pardon me," he scribbled a few lines at his table and handed them to the boy. "An answer at once," he said, and returned to his chair by the fireplace. "For several weeks I have dreamed dreams." He spoke slowly, as though searching for the right expression.

"Your dreams do not interest me."

"They may," he replied simply. He looked into the fire for an interval; the room was so quiet that he could plainly hear her tapping the floor impatiently.

"Three weeks ago," he said, "I met the woman who has become the one woman of my life. I saw her but a moment; I never spoke to her; yet I love her so much that ever since I have carried that image of a second imprinted on my consciousness. Since then I have lived in a torment of longing and self scorn. But the longing has clung to me, waking and sleeping, to hear her voice, to feel her lips, to know her love. In place of these all the pleasures of my world have become but dust and ashes, and life without her an empty shell."

He was speaking into the fire. The Princess covered an incipient yawn. "A pretty tale," she said. "But I repeat: why should it interest me?"

"That you must answer," said Stilton, without taking his gaze from the fire. His very simplicity was disconcerting.

"I?" said the Princess, with a tone of sarcasm; "she is undoubtedly unknown to me and far away."

"On the contrary, none knows her better than yourself." Stilton's voice was as impersonal as though his theme were the weather. To Hermine he was maddeningly calm; her eyelids were half contracted and her whole body was bent forward, lithe and tense. "And she is so near," he continued, "that I hope, I expect, to feel tonight that pressure of her lips." He did not turn or even look at her, but sank down in the chair from which he had half risen.

There was a rustle, just the slightest rustle from the table where the Princess sat. Then she spoke; her words were very even, but they were ringing with defiance and low with scorn. "Take that pen there on the table before you."

Slowly, very lazily, without obeying, Stilton turned his head to look at her, and found his eye glancing along the barrel of a tiny pistol.

"Am I to make my will?" he said cheerfully.

In spite of herself the Princess bit her lips. Then her eyes hardened again. "No; only an apology for your insult

just now, written or spoken, as you prefer."

Stilton made no move to obey. "Until you have heard me further," he said, "I refuse to make either."

"I will not listen till you apologize." He was silent.

"I give you till I count ten," she said very quietly, and she raised her arm again. "One—two—three—four—five—six—" He was looking into the fire again with his back half toward her. "Seven—eight—nine—ten!" With scarcely a second's hesitation she fired; but there was a slight waver in the pistol hand, before so steady. The bullet merely shattered the globe of the drop electric light on the little reading table beside him.

Startled, he collected himself, however, almost immediately. "You keep in character, Princess," he said gravely.

"What do you mean?" she said in a low voice, the smoking weapon still in her hand.

"Doing things on impulse that you would afterward regret."

With a gesture and exclamation of despair she threw the pistol into the corner of the room.

Stilton leaned over quietly to pick up the broken pieces of the shade. "I am surprised," he said, "and yet"—after a slight pause—"I should have known that you would."

Hermine stared gloomily at the opposite wall. "I am also surprised," she said.

"At what?"

"At your nerve."

"I may say the same of yours," he retorted quietly, "except that I am more surprised that you break your word."

"I made no promise," she exclaimed, turning to him.

"No, implied one."

There was a loud knock on his door.

"I suppose you are aware," he said, "that half the hotel will be in on us in a moment."

"I am."

"What shall I tell them?"

"What you please."

"H'm"—there was another, louder rap. "Come in!"

A bell boy opened the door but stepped aside to follow his companions, two house detectives, who took a rather gingerly glance around the room before entering. Neither Stilton nor the girl looked up at their entrance, and the leader of the two looked from one to the other in interrogative hesitation.

"Was there not a pistol shot in your room just now?" he said finally.

It was Stilton who answered in a forced and very pronounced English accent. "Really, my dear fellow, inasmuch as the smoke is still hanging in the room, I shall not attempt to deny it." He paused a moment, waiting for the other to speak; but the man, for all his profession, was not accustomed to collecting scattered thoughts so quickly. "Well, what can I do for you?"

The man found his voice. "Why—er—have you no complaint to make? We thought there might be an accident, or possibly a crime, actual or attempted. In any case it was our duty to investigate."

"Quite so. You have done your duty. You may go."

"Well—er—but—"

"What's the matter?" said Stilton, turning for the first time to look at him.

"Why if you would be kind enough to explain, sir—"

"Explain! Why?" Stilton spoke quickly. "There was neither accident nor crime, actual or attempted, and I have no complaint to make. There is a globe there smashed that belongs to me, and a patch of damaged wall which I will pay for on presentation of the bill. If there are guests whom the noise has disturbed, present them my compliments and regrets and tell them that if the noise occurs again I will apologize to them personally. Anything more?"

"Why no—er—"

"Then get out!"

"But—"

"Get out!"

Hesitating, as if still only half convinced that he was in the wrong, their spokesman backed the others out of the room.

"If I didn't despise you I might ad-

mire you a little," said the girl, who had heard the conversation without speaking or even looking at the interrupters.

"Thank you," said Stilton laconically.

"Don't mention it."

"It paves the way for what I wished to say further."

"Indeed!" sarcastically.

"Yes, Princess, it is of you I have dreamed, of your lips."

She rose, a pink spot of anger in either cheek. "Wasn't your *implied* insult enough to make your proposal detestable to me?"

Her fury did not seem to ruffle him in the slightest, but for the first time he rose from his chair and came over facing her, his face almost stern. "I repeat"—and just the faintest smile twitched the corners of his mouth—"you continue to pave the way for my proposition. I love you and ask you to be my wife."

"I despise you," she cried.

"So you stated."

She fenced for a moment in bitter sarcasm. "Is this your usual routine with prospective game?"

"Why did not you go when they gave you the chance?" was his answer.

"Have I not proved I am not afraid of you?" she cried.

"But possibly I annoy you."

Hermine shrugged her shoulders. "How could you dream of such a thing?" she asked sarcastically. "On the contrary, you amuse me."

"Are you sufficiently interested to answer me?"

"Yes—no."

"Why no?" His very coolness nettled her.

"Can you ask that after the way you have treated me tonight?"

"Haven't I already done so?"

"You are impudent."

"Granted. I am also in earnest."

At that she only shrugged her shoulders again and said nothing. There was another knock on the door and a boy entered with a note on a salver. With a "Pardon me," he tore it open and read.

Hermine's eyes were on the floor.

"After what you have said, do you expect me to believe you when you talk of anything so honorable as marriage?"

"Yes," he said simply.

"You have great presumption."

"Kindly read this note," he said, and he came over and held it out for her.

"I do not care to read your correspondence," she said, in what she regretted as soon as she had said it, as merely puerile stubbornness.

"Would you object if I read it to you?"

"I cannot stop you," was her answer.

"Since you thus entreat me to read it, I cannot refuse," he said with mock gravity, then read aloud:

"Your note received. I'll have a devil of a time. Everything will be ready, however, at seven o'clock—ring, rector, witnesses and myself. It remains for you only to provide the girl. Who in the world is she, and where have you been keeping her? And don't make a fool of yourself."

"'JACK.'"

"This is amusing," she said impersonally.

"Yes, but humor must not detain us long," he said; "it is now half-past six."

Again her anger got the better of her desire to match his *nonchalance*. "Really your impudence passes all bounds. Does my acquiescence count for nothing in this arrangement? Or, perhaps, I flatter myself, and I am not to be consulted, or possibly I am not even concerned."

He came over nearer to where she sat. "On the contrary, you are concerned. You are being consulted, and your acquiescence is awaited."

"It is time for me to go," she said, rising suddenly.

"No, not yet," he said, and as he spoke he caught her wrists.

"Coward!" she cried. "You dared not do that when I had the pistol. What folly for me to think," and her dark eyes almost flashed fire, "that even for a moment you could act like a gentleman!"

Without a word he released her hands and walked leisurely to the corner where she had flung her pistol. Walking to his desk he fumbled there a moment.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"Loading it for you."

While she was deciding what to reply he came over and handed it to her, point to. "You should carry a revolver," he said; "it would give you more chances."

Reaching out his hand he cocked it without taking it from her. "Now that you are presumably more at your ease, we will continue. Let me first warn you, however, that it will be very difficult for me to apologize to neighboring guests, as I promised to do, if your aim should be a little better than it was before."

"Do you think it was poor aim that saved you tonight?" she cried in sudden indignation. "At ten paces? I, who have hunted all my life?"

Stilton smiled. "Then you didn't feel quite so bloodthirsty toward me, after all?"

Seeing herself trapped into an unintended admission, she smiled too. "Do you know, you are a very terrible man?" she said.

"No, only a very earnest lover." At that she smiled again.

"Do all men woo so in your country?"

"As many as there are women who reply as you do." At that she sat down and rested her chin on her hands.

"Why, if you really cared, did you begin by insulting me?"

"I did not begin so."

"Secondarily, then?"

"Secondarily, you ran away from me," he replied.

"But even then you had insulted me."

"It takes three weeks to get the news from Mauringia," said Stilton quizzically.

"You mean—"

"That I don't know what you mean."

"You had put a price on me," she said bitterly; "had treated me as so much merchandise."

"When you fired tonight was I still setting a price?" he asked gravely. She did not reply for a moment.

"Are you ready to go yet?" he continued quietly. "It is a quarter to seven." It might have been an eve-

ning trip to the theater of which he spoke.

"Am I a walking embodiment of the foregone conclusion?" She had risen again in her sudden gust of anger, and he was sure she had never looked so beautiful. "Am I your valet or your dog who tag you to the hour?"

"Neither."

"Then what right have you to address me so?"

"I named the right before—because I love you."

She stood before him unabashed. "I am constrained to believe that you lie," she cried.

At her words, almost before she knew it, he had clasped her in his arms. Purposely he left her revolver arm free, and in a flash she lifted the weapon and held it against his head.

"Stop," he said, quickly but very quietly. "Before you shoot look in my eyes and tell me if I lie."

"Ah, you are too strong for me," she said, with her eyes closed, and the revolver dropped nervelessly from her hand to the floor.

Her face was but a few inches from his and he could hardly keep his voice steady. "Now grant me what I said I expected," he said.

"Oh, let go! I hate you! I hate you!" she cried, struggling in vain to release his hold.

"No, you love me—"

She did not let him finish. "Never!" she said, and tried again to loosen his grasp.

"Come, Hermine," he said very quietly, "it is five minutes to seven."

"Hermine! How long have you had the right to call me Hermine?"

"From the moment that I knew that you loved me."

"And when was that moment?" she said, weakened by his very assurance, in a voice that vibrated with some strange, new feeling that thrilled him unthinking.

"When you fired"—he paused a moment—"and did not hit."

She looked up at him with eyes that were grave, yet bright with unshed tears. "I knew you Americans were wonderful men," she said simply.

"And I?" He leaned down to look into her eyes, but she turned her face to one side. He waited a moment, then she looked up at him.

"And you, beloved," she said, "are most wonderful of all."

And slowly she put her white arms around his neck and turned her lips to his.

O LIFE

By HELEN HAMILTON DUDLEY

O LIFE, I ask of thee so little! Fame
I cast aside as empty save its name.
O Life, I ask of thee so little! Power
I fling away—the bauble of an hour.

O Life, I ask of thee so little! Gold
My hands disdain as far too cheap to hold.
O Life, I ask of thee so little! Joy
I thrust away—'tis far too frail a toy.

Ay, Life, from all the treasures of thy store
I ask but one small thing—and that is this:
That, going down the years, I may not lose
The memory of Yesterday's dead kiss!

ALTRUISM

By HELEN A. SAXON

WHEN cream is ninety cents a quart,
And new laid eggs are soaring,
And butter—of the milder sort—
Necessitates ignoring,
We say, askance, "Just think of that!"
And eat our bread with bacon fat.

But when our neighbors come to dine
We don't consider prices,
But give them courses eight or nine,
From oysters up to ices.
You'd never dream the purse was limp
Or how we have to save and skimp.

For then we buy us cream galore,
And mushrooms out of season
And fatted birds—though prices soar
Beyond all rhyme or reason.
Champagne and festive fizz abound,
And hired waiters gallop 'round.

'Tis thus that we exemplify
The love we bear our brother,
And cheerfully ourselves deny
That we may feed each other,
Obeying both the Golden Rule
And modern altruistic school.

PUNISHED

By J. A. NEWELL

ONCE Melissa with me sat;
We were tête-à-têteing:
Rosebud lips were hers, so that
Mine went osculating.
"Naughty lips," Melissa cried,
Though hers did distract them;
"Naughty lips, indeed," I sighed;
Naughty lips, I smacked them.

THE SOURCE

By OLIVIA HOWARD DUNBAR

THE newspaper containing the paragraph that for some minutes had arrested Monica Bettany's attention, fell to the floor.

Those meetings in Heaven, she reflected, whose prospect so enchants the orthodox heart must, after all, present many of the disconcerting features of the experience that in the full, bright tide of mortal life, now immediately faced her. She was to meet Craig Ashcot that very night, his first night in New York—she was to dine at the same table with him—and they would meet, not, of course, as lovers, nor even as friends, but almost as cloud driven wraiths, a pale memory, perhaps, in their bewildered eyes. The fifteen years that her recollection now contemptuously summarized had left their single meeting, hers and his, on the white shore of their youth; it was literally another life in which they were now again to be brought together. Ashcot might not even, in sentimental language, "remember"; but she tried to believe that that would not be of essential moment to her. This second meeting of theirs was not to have that tawdry significance. It was Ashcot, himself, she too eagerly protested, that she wished to find—not a man's chance memory of a boy's adventure.

Once more she looked at the paragraph enumerating the entertainments to be held in honor of the Ashcots—the eloquent plural had become inevitable since the novelist's wife had assumed so significant a shape in popular legend. Even in those superior circles that had first recognized, and now possessively acclaimed him, Ashcot was scarcely longer regarded as an inde-

pendent figure. He had written, it was conceded, the books to which his name was signed, but it was his wife who had, as the newspapers said, "inspired" them; and there is no doubt as to which is generally regarded as the more important and interesting function, for the astonishing enthusiasm that the man's work had evoked had been largely focused on what would once have been called his "heroines." It was as an interpreter of women that the novelist had wrought his miracles. And, inasmuch as for triumphs of this order the popular mind demands a personal explanation, Ashcot had in his turn been explained in a manner acceptable to his most sentimental reader. The tethering, as it was understood, of his free imagination, to the granite integrity of the American home, was a circumstance that led many a maiden librarian to urge his volumes upon her submissive fold.

Ashcot had married, they said, in his earliest youth; and to this marriage, and to the bride, the adjectives common to romantic narratives were faithfully applied. He had lived always, as he had been born, in a small city of the Middle West. He had kept so aloof from life, both from its disasters and its distractions, that his commentators declared themselves unable to guess where he had acquired the "copy" for his books. Under these circumstances it was only too easy to infer, and it had therefore been inferred, that Ashcot could know nothing of women that his wife had not taught him; that Mrs. Ashcot, if not the literal model for many of her husband's characters, must, at least, by the very logic of exclusion, be

responsible for the confident and penetrating tone in which he wrote of women, the flattering insight of even his most casual portraits.

It was too complete an answer, this, to the questions Monica Bettany had been asking herself ever since a certain afternoon in Rome, so long ago—too complete to be entirely plausible. How incredibly detached from human relationships he had seemed, the shy youth she had so unconventionally encountered that day in the Villa Borghese. She had evaded chaperonage, she remembered, because she imagined that she needed solitude; he, on the contrary, had seemed passionately hungry for companionship, even never in his life to have had any. At all events, the opposite character of their needs had proved no obstacle, once the fragrance of the adventure had seized them. Or perhaps it was only she who, exulting in her own daring, had from the first instant so regarded it. The awkward, rather ugly youth, with beautiful eyes, had seemed amazingly unaware of conventions; his *naïveté* had enchanted and disarmed her, accustomed as she was to young men of one invariable pattern. Quite without self-consciousness, her accidental companion had spoken of "Tirzah," who, he explained, was at a tea party, and when she asked him whom he meant, he confessed, a little perfunctorily, to his recent marriage. For as long as three hours, perhaps, they had dared to talk together, these young creatures of twenty-one, and through it all they had been so serious that they had scarcely smiled. They had each drunk so eagerly, and with such profound sensations of novelty and delight, of what the other innocently offered; and they had seized and held the minutes with an odd, unyouthful consciousness of their transientness, as though they felt Destiny itself behind them waiting to strike and sunder. To both of them the encounter had had the irrecoverable freshness of morning. It was the first time that the girl had known the flattery of a man's unguarded confidence; as it was also the first time, young Ashcot told her, that he had ever

freely spoken of those sacred, almost unmentionable flames, that burned within him. She had been eager to listen, she had been able to understand, and he had told it all to her—the whole story.

"We shall probably never see each other again"—She had thought herself very valiant and unsentimental in framing that phrase, as they parted. "But I shall be watching, just the same, to see whether you do these things you have told me about. Suppose you remember that."

"I can't imagine myself forgetting," he had assured her, in his overserious, half stammering fashion; but any youth, as she had often told herself, would have said as much.

It was not so long afterward that they had married her—rather formidably, it must have seemed, but she had younger sisters pressing behind—to John Bettany. She herself had been taught to expect some such crashing termination to her girlhood, and she met it calmly enough. But since the girl had not coveted John Bettany's money, it seemed to her in her grimmer moments rather unfair that she should have been obliged to earn her share of it by labors so exigent as those shortly forced upon her. Bettany's arrogant unconcern for everything else in the world was balanced, so to regard it, by his passionate concern for horses; thus his shocking fall in the hunting field had left him the most unresourceful of invalids. The five years that followed would perhaps have exhausted Monica past recuperation if this fate had not first overtaken Bettany himself—and she would never have been so great a hypocrite as to deny that with her widowhood came her first real zest in life.

It may not have been wholly the memory of her talk with Craig Ashcot, strongly as this abided with her, that led her more and more, as her new freedom permitted it, to concern herself not only with books, but with the men who made them. By this time Ashcot's first volume had appeared and met its extraordinary reception. She could do

nothing for him; he had "arrived" without her. But kindred channels of beneficence stood open; and increasingly, as her keen intelligence, her money, and the advantages of her position, availed her, she relieved through them the ache of the impulses that Ashcot himself had set astir. That is to say, she became, in a quiet way, a patroness of young writers. The publishers and editors whom she knew, from at first grudgingly admitting that Mrs. Bettany's tact prevented her from becoming a nuisance, later agreed that she was often a help to them. More than one publishing house unofficially employed the touchstone of her intuition, and more than one faint, timid flame, secretly fed and fanned by her, attained later a triumphant blaze.

It was thus that Mrs. Bettany's always graceful presence had seemed especially desirable at the dinner that the Lowerys, Ashcot's publishers and hosts, were giving on the night of his arrival. It was to be a dinner wholly of New Yorkers, or rather of men and women of many cities who had found it expedient to live in that reliable nursery of minor reputations. The English poet and the French dramatist who, by a fortunate chance, were coincidentally making their first visit to America, and who were the lure that for the first time had brought Ashcot to New York other than incognito, were not to meet the novelist until the larger and more important dinner to be given on the following evening.

The day was interminable; but Monica forced a tardiness upon herself and was the last guest to arrive. She could see only Ashcot's back when she entered, but she believed it unmistakable—the slightly uneven line of his shoulders, the quick movements of his black head. How extraordinary, she told herself in delight, that she should have remembered! Was his face, when he turned it toward her, as unmistakable? She had a moment's doubt. It was more than ever a remarkable face, thin, irregular, sensitive, astonishingly luminous, with all its lack of beauty—but it

bore signs that changed it. She was glad he did not know her when they spoke; she was not ready yet to talk with him. She had no wish to abridge the experience she was entering on. Yet her concern with the guest of honor, she shortly discovered, rather singled her from the others. For, strangely enough, they were not all looking at Ashcot, talking of him, the famous man now for the first time caged and exhibited; there was, instead, a flutter of politely subdued disappointment—Mrs. Ashcot had not come!

It was Manners, the popular novelist and chief money-maker for his publishers, a sleek, round faced man, who took Mrs. Bettany in. And he promptly revealed the temper of the occasion by remarking languidly after they were seated:

"Such a pity that Mrs. Ashcot—"

Manners was rather spoiled, and unless he forgot himself he did not trouble, nowadays, to finish his sentences.

"Is it such a misfortune?" Monica suavely questioned. "I almost think it is ungracious of us to feel that, when we have secured so much, with Mr. Ashcot here at last."

Manners, who was the unresisting medium of all cheap generalizations, gave her a brief, amused glance which she found it quite unnecessary to interpret. It meant: "Of course, even a good looking woman can't see anything to deplore in the absence of another woman." But what he said aloud was:

"Charming fellow, isn't he? Remarkable, those books of his! But he's not the sort that—that— Now"—he bent toward Monica enlighteningly—"the woman who has made him what he is, you know, would be worth looking at."

"Oh! You said the woman who had made him?"

"His wife, of course. You know the story about—you know the story. What I mean is—if the man's great—I don't say he is—" the contemporary carefully guarded his utterance—"but if

he's great, why, it will probably be she that people will talk about after he's dead. You know how it is, how it's the human part of it all that the world is interested in, Dante and Beatrice, that sort of thing." A congenial theme had stimulated Manners to positive fluency.

"There's no question about it, then," Monica deferred—"Mrs. Ashcot figuring in her husband's books?"

"It's this way, Mrs. Bettany," her neighbor explained himself. "Of course you and I know better than to believe newspaper stories. But if you've read Ashcot's books you've seen the internal evidence as well as I can see it. You'll see that that woman has stood the test of marriage as no other writer's wife has stood it, that I can remember. Men who have had silly wives have written about silly wives." Monica recalled Mrs. Manners and felt her first throb of compassionate interest in the confident exposition. "There's—well, there's Dickens. You see, it's in that one line that a man's experience seems to close him in. They can conceive the most extravagantly desirable sweethearts and—"

"But they can't write of domesticated angelhood if they haven't experienced it!" Monica, laughing, finished for him. "Don't you think it all rather goes to prove that artists shouldn't have wives?"

"H'm. I'd like Ashcot's answer," he replied, and for a moment they both were silent, their gaze bent on the man sitting at the other end of the table. As they did so, Monica met Ashcot's eye, and he looked at her seriously, disconcertingly, yet without apparent recognition. It was piquing, but how could it have been otherwise? She was not tall, or blonde, or noticeably any of the things that a man remembers. As for his own bony, meager face, with its haunted look, there would be no forgetting that, if one did not see him for a lifetime. A halting observation made by Manners went unanswered as she watched Ashcot's sudden, brilliant smile, with its effect of piecing out other people's jests, making

them of greater substance. He still spoke, she noticed, with the hesitation of unconquerable diffidence. Yet in spite of his obvious shyness and his probable inexperience, there was no stamp of the provincial on him. His simplicity was of the spare, distinguished sort that overbalanced fluent sophistication of the others.

Later, in the drawing room, the buzz of lament for Mrs. Ashcot seemed to Monica still irritatingly loud. It was plainly the absent guest who was to have provided the sensation; the hungry horde was unwilling to be put off with the lean morsel that the novelist himself, reticent, devoid of anecdote, provided. As Ashcot entered the room his glance again met Monica's, and again her blood stood still in her veins as she waited for him to speak, to show that he knew. But he looked away. Then, borne by his hostess toward a group that included Mrs. Manners, a small woman with a fluffy blonde head and a black spangled gown, he was appropriated by that consciously arch little person.

It was not until Mrs. Bettany was making her way to take leave of her hostess that Ashcot, abruptly bowing to a group with whom he had been talking, detained her.

"You will pardon me if I have made a mistake," he began—rather awkwardly, until her quick smile helped him. Then—with almost that eager, boyish accent she had treasured so many years—"but aren't you Miss—aren't you Monica?"

"Did you really remember me?" she demanded in frank delight. "Did no one tell you?"

"I did know you, almost at once. I am afraid I stared at you. But I wanted to be quite sure. You've grown so much more splendid. . . . And now I have so many things to tell you. Nobody has ever listened to me since that day in the gardens."

Why should she not admit to herself that it was just this that she had hoped for—hoped for so extravagantly that she had been unwilling to prompt him, to aid his recollection?

"Ah, then you will come to see me? Can you remember the address? And I am Mrs. Bettany. You will come soon?"

"Tomorrow morning?" he begged.

She assented, and left him.

Yesterday the fifteen years had seemed to Monica almost a lifetime. Today they seemed (for her excitement had become augmented overnight) hardly more significant than a pause in a conversation. Indeed, as Ashcot's arrival with each moment more closely impended, she felt more and more like one who, in the midst of a spirited talk, has had to suffer a dull interruption. Mercilessly prolonged, of course, but only an interruption, after all.

The telephone sounded in the next room. As she had divined, it was Ashcot. There was at that moment no escape from the engagements that had been made for him, but he assured her that he would make use of his earliest hour of liberty. Of the very many shades of inflection that may be used in conveying a message of this sort, Ashcot's eager voice held the one unmistakable note. Monica smiled an odd little smile as she left the telephone.

But several days were to pass before he found his way to her. Meanwhile, even to its farthest fringes, the social atmosphere that she breathed resounded with comments upon the eminent visitor. Already the mutable public mind had half forgotten that his wife had failed to come—that she was to have come at all. Women chattered of Craig Ashcot at tea, and men pronounced on him at dinner. Those who could prove an authentic glimpse of him laboriously described him to such as were obliged to confess themselves, so far as this luminary was concerned, thwartingly penumbral. Those who had actually met him held little impromptu receptions, on street corners, wherever one encountered them. So inaccessible all these years had he contrived to keep himself that he was as available for exploitation as though he had come from Australia, or the Arctic stretches. Thus everything

that could be said of him was novelty, but it wasn't, as shortly came to be hinted, novelty of the most welcome sort. The hardest social adventurer could not feel at ease with him. His great avid eyes seemed to take in too much and their owner produced an equal discomfort by giving too little out. It was found that he stubbornly rejected flattery; and in what other fashion should one address oneself to a celebrity? There was even a suspicion that in the company of the two distinguished Europeans he might have failed to demonstrate the superiority of his own race and country. It was not that his admirers were ashamed of him; but they would have had him at least more readily articulate.

Such comments as these, so far as they were put into words, were far from afflicting the one woman to whom Ashcot required no explanation. Monica had even a stealthy joy in the knowledge that his value was not more easily grasped. It diverted her to observe the Lowerys' struggle to assume an intimately sympathetic relation with their difficult guest; and her whimsical mind found great zest in extemporizing, for them, and for others, her own ostensible "first impression" of Ashcot. Even without seeing him, she felt that their friendship was curiously growing firmer day by day. They could afford, then, he and she, to play their fantastic game of being strangers before the dull eyes of as many others as they pleased.

At the same time she was subconsciously eliminating an idea that a few days ago had rather unpleasantly obsessed her. It no longer seemed necessary to consider the legend of Ashcot's wife. The personality Monica had re-encountered at the Lowerys' was as spiritually isolated as when it had made its first poignant appeal to her. No deadening domestic attachment, such as Mr. Manners had conjectured, had narrowed his flights while it blunted him with comforts. Whoever, whatever, his unimportant wife might be, Ashcot had impressed her as still sublimely detached.

But to have dismissed one theory merely made room for others. If Mrs. Ashcot was a nonentity, whom, then, had her husband known, in his lifelong provincial prison—he, the interpreter, the creator, of women? Taking the widest, sanest view of artistic achievement, didn't his row of remarkable books still leave something to be explained? Didn't even his eager recollection of herself demand some little explanation? Not a sentimental explanation, of course; the circumstances of the case cleared it perfectly of that suspicion. No man would remember for fifteen years a charming girl—although she was glad to remember that she *had* been a charming girl—blithe, delicately fashioned, with a warm, bright fuzz of hair—merely because she had for an hour or so affected his juvenile emotions. The bond between them was of far rarer significance than that. Might it even be—she tried to proceed very cautiously—the most significant of all? Might it be some memory of her, exalted, idealized, of course, that had pervaded his work? There was, for instance, that Roman story—she had always half suspected . . . Well, their talk together was coming soon and he would tell her, acknowledge his debt to her. He could do no less.

Monica chanced to be alone on the late afternoon when Ashcot came, and she saw to it that they should not be disturbed.

. . . The fifteen years had been only an interruption, after all. The first five minutes determined that. Their talk began to flow without deliberate direction, and it took them straight back to Rome. Ashcot insisted on rehearsing the youthful adventure—and with such particularity that Monica felt almost a sense of pain at the tenacity of his recollection. Yet, his having treasured through all that he had since experienced the slightest incidents of their meeting, made her own secret supposition something more than the extravagance of vanity.

Absence of common association lends an astonishing spur to intimacy. Thus

they were spared, these two, the tiresome falsities in which a too familiar knowledge of each other might have entangled them. That was the secret of it, Monica thought exultingly. They had actually been so young when they met that they had dared speak the truth to each other, and there had been no later opportunity to blur and alter it. That was why nothing had been lost, why the beauty of their relation had been magically recovered. They knew only the essentials of each other, and those were unchanged. Ah, but there was one irrecoverable thing—she bent for a second to a thought that smote her. How merciful Ashcot had been, to forgive her lost look of youth!

Their hour together had slipped away before they had begun to talk seriously, yet Monica saw that her guest would shortly be late for whatever engagement he might have. He had found a singular ease in talking to her, and sat cheerfully disregardful of the too imminent dinner hour.

"If you were only an everyday, uncelebrated visitor!" she suddenly interrupted, bending toward him, "so that I might ask you to stay and dine with me!"

Ashcot looked at his watch and admitted that his presence would shortly be looked for at some sort of semi-public affair. Then, with the sensational boldness of which only a shy person is capable, and which affected the conventional Monica with an ecstatic horror, he announced that he would relieve himself by telephone of whatever obligation it might be that his hosts had industriously arranged for him, and accept Monica's own invitation, if she would allow him to construe it as such. She smiled at her guest's momentary abashment when he returned from the telephone. Her imagination had heard with such perfect distinctness Henrietta Lowery's icy sweetness at the other end.

Until they sat together at dinner—the hitherto gently diffused flavor of hospitality, now distilled, as it were, and concretely presented before them in the somber stately room—Monica

knew that so far as Ashcot was concerned it was precisely as if they had met in midair. It was as if he now realized for the first time that she had not been all these years a young girl in Rome, strolling in the Villa Borghese; as if he only now became aware of the house within whose walls he was, strewn with its substantial and, as it happened, beautiful implications of that great part of her life of which he had no knowledge. He was quite right, she thought, as she delicately soothed his obvious disturbance. Midair was distinctly the more agreeable element. Indeed, before dinner was over she had succeeded by various discreet swoops in guiding his return to it. Thus intangibly released and subtly ministered to, Ashcot had grown almost gay when they returned to the drawing room, a mood so rare, it appeared, that he pathetically felt obliged to contrive an explanation. It was intoxicating, he told her, not to be obliged to answer questions about his books. They asked him such inconceivably stupid ones. He knew he had been very disagreeable.

"But you forget I haven't had my turn," Monica teased him. "And I have hundreds of questions. I have stored them up for years."

"I wonder if you don't know the answers already," he smiled at her from the big chair where he had distributed his long limbs in a boyish sprawl. "You knew so much more than I did, I remember. You were so innocently wise."

"Did I deceive you so? I was the simplest creature! Simple enough to tell you everything that there was in me, and it couldn't have taken me but a few minutes, either."

"I remember everything that you told," he said quietly.

They had rounded their circle again. Monica had not meant that they should go back to Rome. There was not time enough. The bright, treacherous minutes were like quicksilver. She must not let them all slip through her fingers without giving her what she legitimately expected. It was scarcely possible that another such perfect op-

portunity should bloom for her. It wasn't for a light, familiar flow of reminiscence that she had waited fifteen years—however she might have deceived herself a week ago. She had been much to him, he had admitted that, but she must know how much. If it was she to whom it had miraculously been given to feed his starved life, to fan his exhausted spirit, he must tell her. Perhaps, wise as he was, he did not know that women faint for explicit assurances. She took a stumbling, embarrassed step in the direction that she wished to lead him.

"You made me such brave promises that day," she began, "not to squander your dreams, to build something real from them. If I had been older I could not have believed, as I did, that it would come to pass. And yet the incredible thing has been that you have fulfilled them, every one."

Her face was turned to the fire that blazed near them, but she was quite aware that Ashcot looked at her steadily in the slight pause that followed.

"Then you saw that I had not made them lightly," he gently reminded her.

"But it has almost too much the effect of legerdemain. I want to know more," her quick, vivacious speech demanded. "You see, I've been watching people make books for years—little people, of course. But it interests me, it's all I do. Now I want to know how you have done it. Has it seemed to you like the swelling of the seed, a passive growth, or has there to be a prod, an impetus?"

"With my torpid talents," he replied deliberately, "I suppose there has to be an impetus."

"Oh! But with a man"—she felt a sort of treachery in pressing him—"that always means, doesn't it, one thing?"

"One thing?" he questioned a little severely.

"A woman."

Ashcot was silent.

"Have I trespassed?" she asked him softly, yet with no real repentance. Her desire was still too strong. "Are

there things we mustn't talk of, after all?"

It seemed to her that he got rather grim as he answered:

"If you are referring to your sense of conventional propriety, I think we needn't consider that too much. But, I find my truth telling muscles are pretty stiff. I wonder if you would let me smoke a pipe?"

Bewildered by the tone he had taken, she watched him take out the ugly thing and fill it, then walk nervously about the room. After all, that angular figure had a certain impetuous grace—irrelevant as such a quality was beside the power of his head, the electric brilliancy of his eyes. When they began to talk again it was, in rather a guarded way, of the novels. Monica waited until Ashcot spoke of the Roman one, then sprang recklessly for the opening that she thought this gave her.

"How much I like your 'Laura'!" she assured him. "Perhaps it will interest you—I was very young when I first read the book, of course, and at that time I was foolish enough to imagine that—that there was something of me in her that—"

"You were quite wrong," he broke in rather sharply.

Monica, stunned, could say nothing. It was as if he had struck her. And it was scarcely tolerable that he should have repeated, as he did, "You have had nothing to do with my work." She turned away her flushed face and began to murmur something not nearly so intelligible to him as the hurt quality in her voice.

Ashcot understood. "I've offended you!" he exclaimed disarmingly. "But there was no need—it's really such an obvious thing. I want you to know, I believe you do know, that no personal experience has ever been as important to me as that wonderful encounter with you. But as for my work—one doesn't put one's beautiful memories into that, just as one doesn't put one's tragic ones. One's own life—thank heaven, one can keep that distinct!"

"That isn't what they say of you."

She had a shocked sense of being unable to restrain the words, of their being the last that would willingly have escaped her.

"What do they say of me?"

"Oh, a pretty fable—quite the opposite of what you have told me. That all your books are drawn, in a sense, from your own life; that all your women are—Mrs. Ashcot. Such idle stories—"

How coarse the intention of such a speech must seem to him. Yet, for the first time in her life, she was unable to control those apparently so coolly chosen words.

His eyes were bent closely on her. She felt that he was interpreting her with a superhuman justness. "I have been told they said that," he said slowly, and with long pauses. "In a sense they are right. . . . Are you interested to know in what sense? It may be a long story."

There was no need to urge him now. It was coming, she could see, all, more than she wanted to know. She had crudely asked him, or it amounted to that, whether she had supplied the fire for his workshop, and he felt bound, it appeared, to explain to her why she had not. Well, since, in spite of his pretty phrases, she had been nothing to him, she could at least fill the eternal function that any other woman could have filled as well—of listening. It was her fault, of course, but she wished that they had kept their magic circle drawn close about their two selves. It choked her to think of listening to the story of his marriage. She at least had told him no whining tale of John Bettany.

Then, in a low, unmoved voice, not warmly and youthfully, as he had spoken of his novels—and of her—Craig Ashcot began to talk. In spare, searching phrases, he told her of his boyhood, his mother's early death, his father's pride in the elder brother, Warren, who went through college and studied law, while Craig inefficiently hung about, accomplished nothing. When he was nineteen he had first beheld beauty, mystery, divinity, in

the form of a young girl. In some miraculous way it became possible for him to make love to her. To a dumb, dreamy, unhappy creature, she gave a voice. His sudden articulateness was her gift. Her unconscious gift, however, Ashcot dryly explained. The boy who so ardently wished to marry, and whom she shortly agreed to marry, represented nothing that she admired. He was not good looking, he did not play football and he could not earn money—did not need to, fortunately, since his mother had left him a comfortable legacy. Warren Ashcot, on the other hand, was the boarding school type of hero; but Warren had declined to become entangled with the pretty young girl next door.

"Oh, I might have guessed it," Monica exclaimed, but so gently that Ashcot scarcely heard her. "That is the way it always happens—and to such a boy as you!"

They were married, Ashcot continued calmly; they made their proper little tour of Europe, they returned to take up their life together. But by that time there was nothing left of his boyish illusions. He had learned that the woman he had married really hated him, and that, wherever he might take her, his brother Warren would always be intrusively near.

He had paused. "Please go on," begged Monica, her voice soft with maternal indulgence and pity.

"What I set out to explain to you," he went on, "and even to myself this has always seemed rather curious—is the effect that all this had upon my imagination. Tirzah, poor girl, wasn't the sort of being I had built my early raptures on; but she couldn't help that. However, I was so made in the beginning, and so bruised and knocked about at this particular time, that I had to believe in something beautiful to keep alive at all, to keep sane. So I set to writing books, and the chief effort that they cost me was in realizing the things that were shut away from me but must somewhere exist, the—women that must somewhere exist. It's been her abso-

lute negation, I mean, that's helped me all through."

"There has been no one? You have guessed, divined it all?" Monica questioned excitedly.

"No one but her, but Tirzah. Every day her little personality would shrilly insist, 'I am not this'—'I am not that.' That gave me persistence. I would have it that such things were. So I kept desperately at work to make them so. Those are the only conditions I have ever worked under. Do you see why I wished to keep my thought of you apart from them?"

He heard a faint murmur. "I didn't deserve to have you tell me!"

"Please don't take it that way," he begged her. "I told you because I knew you would understand. I've never told anyone else. But I did not wish to force your sympathy. My own personal feeling is so long dead, it's simply a handful of ashes to me. All that I wished to exhibit to you was the rather ironical character of my inspiration. She is the source of it all, poor woman. If anybody has to be celebrated, I must, in honesty, insist that it be she!"

He finished lightly and smiled at her as he rose.

"Then there has never been anything for you, outside your books, but that handful of ashes?"

"Nothing at all—until I found you again. But you have spread such an enchantment that I believe I had forgotten all the things I have left and must go back to."

"You left her ill?"

"Officially, yes. She had planned to come. But the day before we were to leave my brother came back. He had been in the West for six months."

Neither said anything, as he took her delicate hands and kissed them, of another meeting. It did not so much matter, the chance of further words, further encounters. The warm, fine, imponderable fabric of their friendship held them now so closely, permanently bound together; they might, if they chose, rest long content within its folds.

The night that followed, beautiful, silent, sleepless, was too short for a realization of all that Ashcot had said. When morning came Monica still sat absorbed. But if her reflections were more intense than they had been the day before, they were vastly less coherent. She had known then what she wanted; but how, since it had been nothing but a gratification of her vanity, could she have wanted it so much? With a new ingenuousness she told herself that she was no longer capable of the lesser desires of yesterday. Something had ennobled her since then. She believed that now she would only wish for great, unselfish things.

It did not astonish her when, late in the morning, her friend was announced. It would not have astonished her if he had spoken from the next room, the sense of him stayed so vividly with her. It was in the same spirit of intimacy that they met downstairs, where Monica found her visitor moving restlessly about. He had come, he told her, for a brief good-bye. He was leaving unexpectedly for the West that afternoon.

His speech, calm almost to indifference, was, nevertheless, not deceptive. "What has happened?" Monica demanded.

"Something that was inevitable," he admitted. "Something that a professional spinner of yarns might so easily have foreseen—might have worked out on a scrap of paper like a sum. It's all in the very first primer of human relations. Warren and Tirzah—"

"Of course," she said, with a curious leaping sensation of relief that he had mentioned no catastrophe more vital to himself. What could it matter that the "handful of ashes" had blown away? . . . "You hadn't thought of it after all that you told me? I'm rather less nice than you, for I had thought of it. Why are you going?"

"Why? Merely because I can't decently remain here."

"You've nothing sensational in mind?"

"Why is it that I haven't?" he de-

manded of her. "My grandfather wouldn't have hesitated a second before shooting the man who had stolen his wife. Neither would my father. All that I can feel is a mild pity for both of them."

"I don't see why so gentle an emotion should take you away by the first train. Let me advise you. Go now to some pleasant place. Don't go immediately—there."

"You couldn't easily understand how it is. But I know them both so well. It will be such a little time before Warren will be tired of the affair, and then the poor creature will need me. He cares nothing for her."

"You poor, blind thing! You don't see that you are free?"

Ashcot said nothing and she eagerly continued: "Surely you don't regard marriage as superstitiously as this!"

"One doesn't leave a pet cat to shift for itself," he reminded her. "That isn't superstition. It's the most elementary humaneness."

"Ah, you do feel bound to her. And still she has given you nothing all these fifteen years. No happiness, as you have told me. No children, even. And now, at last, when she has given you something—you won't take it?"

He might disregard her feverish argument, but it wasn't equally possible to disregard the spirit that it had set flaming in her delicate face. "I'm not able to regard myself as an average man," he nevertheless told her seriously. "And I can't expect to have the average lot. Happiness isn't for a man with work to do. It's unthinkable. It would swallow him up, dissolve his energy—"

"Is life only writing?" she asked him quietly. "Is there no *you*—no human part?"

"There is a 'human part,'" he answered her gently. "Dear Monica, you leave me no secrets. You drive me to defend my character as a human being by confessing that within the last day I've known that I'm in love with you. But you will agree that that is not a sentiment for me to cultivate."

"It's not such a flattering confession," said Monica, rather indistinctly, after a moment, "made in that spirit. But if you won't treat your own emotions with respect, then how about me? If it were true that I loved you, too, would you then feel no responsibility—to me?" She lowered her face until he could see only her crisp, ruddy hair, and her hands clenched tightly in the lap of her white dress. "Think about it. For it is true. And what you must do now is to choose between us. I have loved you—and for fifteen years. She has never loved you. Now she has discarded the last pretence of doing so. The gods have prompted her. And you tell me you are not free!"

"I don't dare take you seriously," he said. "I can only leave you and beg you to forgive me. One can't allow oneself to believe such things as you have compassionately said. Women don't love men of my sort—I have learned that."

"If you did believe it—if you believed that I loved you, that I begged you to stay—would you do it?"

They had come swift and far. It was as if they stood together on the tip of a long, steep promontory. Ashcot did not shrink.

"Ah, you must know!" he told her.

They were poised now with incredible lightness on the brink of the wind-swept, rocky ledge.

"You would stay, whatever happened to her, and to your work? If the happiness did dissolve your energy, if it left you only me?"

"It scarcely could present itself as a choice, with you attainable."

What was she doing? One word, ten words more, and the plunge would be made. Had she a right to do it? It was only an hour ago that she had been abjuring selfish things. It was no question of that other wretched woman. But the man's great gifts—so much greater than the man himself, than she, than their possible happiness together—must she tamper with them?

She who was no priestess of their flame, who could only be their destroyer?

She turned to him. "It is true, isn't it, what you said—that happiness would annihilate you, the writing part of you?"

"Oh, I suppose that's beyond any doubt. But one could laugh aloud at the destruction of it, if one held fresh, sweet, primal joys in his grasp—"

"Ah, no, one couldn't!" She felt herself firmly drawing him back. It wasn't either courage or cowardice. It was simply facing things. It was not appointed that she, who could have encompassed him with love, was to be the source of his great energies. Her only course, then, was to beware of deflecting them.

"And that, after all, hasn't been the bond between us, as we both know," she now reminded him, in a voice so changed that it set him wondering whether he had not imagined what had gone before. "That is beautiful for others, but it isn't our way. It's our way to ignore folly, isn't it?—to be old and super-humanly wise. And we were old and wise at twenty. We don't believe in getting heartbroken. As you say of yourself, we have other matters to attend to. We don't go in for that sort of thing."

"You mean to send me away?" He looked at her, bewildered.

She held out her hand. Her smiling face showed not a trace of emotion or yielding to emotion. The door he had for a moment wildly fancied ajar was impenetrably closed. Well—she had already given him much more than the habit of his life had prepared him to receive. In the matter of happiness he had well learned to be austere temperate. So, a moment later, he left her standing where she had always stood, alone and worshipful beside the current of his life, peering with her perfect vision to its wonderful depths, but distant as ever from its obscure and unconscious source.

IN ALGERIA

By ROLAND FRANKLYN ANDREWS

VICTOR clicked his heels and stood at the salute.

"Ah," he said, "monsieur wonders that I who am now fat—so fat, indeed, that but for my carriage of the head I might seem one of monsieur's Irish gendarmerie—should stand as the soldier. It is absurd, monsieur thinks? I have been a soldier, monsieur, and he who passed out was my general of brigade.

"Yes, it is so that he has not the great chest, and that his mustache hangs down instead of coming to the two points, and that his shoulders droop, but it is none the less true that he has the right of the salute. There is reason why he no longer looks the commandant. I have known it long—longer even than he has been coming to me—though he began when I had but three tables, and, as monsieur himself has said, one could scarcely call my *bouillabaisse* more than ordinary. He was my general of brigade.

"I could ride, monsieur. Yes, I who am now fat and take my greatest care that monsieur's salad shall be perfect, could ride like a Spahi; better, perhaps, since the Spahi must have always the high saddle and is, after all, of but little value at the trot. That is why I was orderly to the general of brigade. It was in Algeria—monsieur has guessed? Perhaps he has heard of the Foreign Legion—although, in truth, they were for the most part not foreign, but sons of France who had found it good to come to the colors in another country. I knew Algeria—the towns, Hajira, Ouisert, El Harib, Biskra; and the regiments, Spahis, Turcos, Chasseurs à Pied, Chasseurs à Cheval, Zous Zous.

I was the orderly. Three years I was the orderly—until my general had no longer his brigade.

"There came to us with a draft from the Marseilles steamer an officer, a young sous-lieutenant, tall—ah, very tall—handsome, and with hair so yellow that but for his blue tunic one might easily have mistaken him for one of the boy English officers such as one sees when the ship lies at Gibraltar. He laughed, as do the English, too, long and very loud, and he made jokes. Also, he could shoot and ride and give the commands—'cr'r'ack'—like the first sound of the old *mitrailleuse*. Monsieur should have seen him striding along at the flank of his company, so brave, so gay, so fine in his uniform. A true soldier of La Belle France, monsieur would have said.

"Now, in those days the shoulders of my general of brigade were not bended, and his mustache did not hang down where it should have stood out straight with the points waxed. In truth, it was snow white, as, indeed, was his hair, but his back was as flat as that of the young officer himself. A fine figure of a man, he was, who could outmarch even the Turcos on foot, and ride so that even I, who could ride like a Spahi, and who was his orderly, was often pressed to keep at his heels. He could play with the cards; he could outlast at the dinner even the Governor-General, who, being of the civilians, had much the more constant training; he was as dashing as a Murat in the battle, and as for the ladies—ah, many was the glance that followed my white headed general of brigade when he rode through Algiers. Indeed, it

was known in all the South that he had won his wife from a *corps d'armée* of youthful lovers, because in all the things which men do for the pride of their strength and skill he excelled them greatly. 'To live, that is the thing,' said my general; 'to live and be happy, to know good wine, good company and good fighting wherever one may find them, and the devil look after the blockhead that cannot look after himself. To live and be a soldier!'

"He saw the young officer striding along at the flank of his company with the laugh in his eyes, so brave, so gay, so tall and fine in his bright uniform, and at once he knew him as a man of his kind. '*Peste!*' he said to me, who rode always at his heels, 'there is a saber too good for these crushers of sand.' So he spoke. Before we had left for the Southern station the young officer was of my general's personal staff. Before we had come to Biskra he was sharing my general's compartment. When we took to the march he rode at my general's right. He was my general's favorite aide, so greatly in his favor that those who rode farther to the rear said one to the other, 'There is a man who may win his marshal's baton without a campaign.' They were jealous, monsieur sees, that one so young should so easily gain place.

"Always the young officer had for my general a new joke, a new story or the newest of the Paris *chansons*. He made many things of wit about our fat major of transport, who had continually to apologize for the delays of his train; he told sly things of the colonels who had many reasons for not rejoicing that they had been sent from Algiers; he jested of the sand and the heat; and sometimes he made for the *chansons* the most amusing new verses, which told of our column and of the Arabs and of the things which all of us had done or were to do—or perhaps even had failed at doing. At these my general would throw back his white head and laugh so loudly that the Chasseurs à Pied, marching behind the escort, would raise their heads that they, too, might catch something of the merriment.

And my general would clap the young officer upon the back and call him an '*enfant terrible*,' and they would both laugh together in a way that with any other general but my general would have been quite bad for discipline. Ah, that was a jolly campaign for my general of brigade, save that the tribesmen ran away before us and it seemed that there would be no fighting.

"'*Peste!*' my general would say when we had marched far and had come to nothing. 'Will they never stand to face us?'

"Then the young officer would make a new jest about the haste of the Arabs to return to their homes, and my general would laugh loudly again.

"They dare not trust their women with even the mirages of caravans,' he would roar. '*Allons!* We shall catch them yet. For the rest, here we are, you and I and my little *chassepots*. Shall we not have wine? To live, that is the thing; and may the devil take care of the blockhead who cannot take care of himself.'

"It is hot in the South, monsieur; so hot that often one feels as though the air pressed against him tightly. There is the sand to trickle through one's gaiters and make the feet sore for marching. There is the glare which rises up from below to strike one in the face even with the helmet pulled down over the eyes, and always there is the sun, so strong that those who stand in it sometimes fall suddenly as though struck by a rifle ball, and sigh as if glad it was no longer required to stand. Yet, when all these things came, the young officer was still brave and bright in his uniform. He went among the men and gave those who had been careless drink from his water bottle. He showed those who were lame how to wrap soft cloths about their feet, and he made the jokes and sang the songs exactly as he had done for my general, who, instead of being angry, was greatly pleased, and called the young officer a '*beau sabreur*,' which, indeed, was the finest compliment my general could make any man.

"But, not always was my young

officer so light of spirit. Sometimes, when he rode alone, he looked only at the mane of his horse, not seeing the many things about him, and resting his hands upon the pommel of the saddle as one very tired. In those times his eyes had the look of sadness, but always when he came once more to my general he tossed back his head like a boy, and smiled so gaily that my general would laugh and swear that even in the desert there was as good company as on the boulevards.

"So greatly, indeed, did my general desire the presence of this, his favorite aide, that he had him always to share the evening meal. With the slow moving column in the South, as monsieur doubtless knows, we do not use the small tents, which are scarcely comfortable to even a Turco. For all officers there are tents with walls, which roll up to let in the air, and for my general there was a very fine, large house of canvas, with a bed and table and folding chairs, all of which the fat major of transport carried carefully in his train. In this fine tent I served them both with dinners. Monsieur will perhaps believe that even in the field I could prepare a dinner not to be despised, for a good cook is always a good cook, even when he is far from many of the things needed for cookery, and is also an orderly, having to consider the needs of horses.

"One night, as they sat with cognac and coffee, while I stood close at hand to be ready when they should command more, the sadness came again into the young officer's eyes, and he looked long out into the dark, which in the South is not as ours, but a soft, heavy, clinging blackness, which has in it something of the velvet portières one sees in salons, and something of the serpents one sees wrapped about the bodies of women in the performances. Myself, I was surprised that the young officer should show the sadness to my general, before whom he was always so gay. My general, he struck the table a great blow with his hand and demanded reason.

"*'Peste!'* he cried. 'Is it the battle

we may have tomorrow? No? *Dame!* then it is a lady!' And he shouted with great laughter that he should have so quickly discerned the secret.

"At first I thought it was anger which came to the young officer's face, but this was not so. He looked away from the darkness to my general on the other side of the table, and he spoke very gently.

"*'Yes,'* he said, 'it is a lady. I think of her at home in France—under these same stars—and then I think of us here—under these same stars.'

"I do not know why he should have said twice that the stars were the same stars. Neither did my general, who only laughed the more and beat upon the table with his hand. But my general was not now vexed. 'More cognac, Victor,' he called to me. 'More cognac, that we may drink to the lady who makes a *boulevardier* of my *beau sabreur*.'

"I brought the cognac and they drank together, first raising their glasses. My general threw a little of the cognac over his shoulder for the fortune, and he snapped the stem of his glass as I have seen the English do. 'But, *ma foi*,' he roared—and I think he was not altogether pleased—'what a man are you to bring a lady with you? Here is no place for women, neither in the head nor in the heart. Here should be only men: men for good wine, good marching and good fighting. Women! A man needs them not. Bah! When I take to the saddle for France I forget even madame, my wife.'

"*'That is easily to be believed,'* said the young officer, making his voice like silk; 'that is easily to be believed, since you, my general, are before all else a man of the bivouac.'

"My general called for more cognac. 'I am before all else a soldier of France,' he said.

"*'But with me,'* went on the young officer, 'it is not so. I am not a veteran general of the brigade with a ribbon to wear'—and he bowed gravely to my general, whose ribbon came when we fought the Prussians—'and an enemy to overwhelm. I wear only this'—

and from his tunic he drew a little golden locket on a chain as fine as a spinning of moonlight—"and I carry her with me everywhere. Shall we say that it is not good that I do so? See! It was she who taught me the jests and the *chansons* with which we amuse ourselves: it was she who taught me tenderness, so that I know when men need my water bottle and when they suffer from the sand and the sun; it is she who makes me brave—so brave that I am not afraid to be here now."

"*Parbleu!*" snapped my general in anger, 'what talk is this of fear? Since you must talk like a Quartier verse maker, monsieur, why do you remain here? Why do you not return to France and marry the lady?'

"The young officer smiled at the closed locket in his hand. 'That is not to be,' he said very slowly.

"My general sat up. 'She refuses you?'

"No, monsieur. She refuses me nothing."

"The devil!" said my general.

"So," said the young officer. 'Monsieur, she is married.' And when my general would have leaped to his feet and spoken, he held up his hand for silence, quite as though he were the general of brigade and my general only the galloper of the staff. And then, while the darkness grew more like the velvet curtains and the serpent, and I stood there in the shadow ready with more cognac when they should make command, he told my general the long, and, I thought, beautiful story of the slender, lovely lady, who lived like a flower in an old rose garden at the garrison town, and whose heart was his, even as his was hers, although the holy Church and the Republic had left her no heart to give, having, indeed, given it before to an old and hardened man, in whom there was neither good faith nor honor, nor the wisdom of true tenderness which should shelter such as she from harm. 'And tell me, my general,' said the young officer, looking straight into my general's eyes, 'do I do right or do I do wrong? Am I a scoundrel or—'

"But my general was beating him upon the back and shouting with mirth. 'Come,' he cried, 'this is an adventure where I thought to find only a boy's folly. You are a man of spirit, a man of my own metal. Hah, I am not so old but what I know the spice of an affair! Indeed, you are again my own *beau sabreur*. Young and beautiful and with a rascally old husband! Ah, that is an adventure worth one's while! An adventure with a zest to stir one's blood—eh? Come, you said a garrison town! Perhaps I, myself, know the lady.'

"No," said the young officer, 'you do not know her at all, my general.'

"Then a look at her pretty face!"

"The young officer slipped the locket back into his tunic. 'Pardon,' he said. 'It is not now the time! Soon—a little while—'

"But my general had changed. 'No, he cried, 'I will not see. She is for you and you alone. Ah, what a devil of an adventure! More cognac, Victor, to pledge the fairest lady in France.'

"I brought the brandy. They filled their glasses. 'I drink,' said the young officer, 'to her freedom, though I may never again see so much as the tips of her wings.'

"And I drink," cried my general, 'that you may soon see the last of her miserable husband. To live, that is the thing. And may the devil take care of the blockhead that cannot take care of himself!'

"Much of the night they sat there, the young officer speaking only a little, and that very softly, but my general beating the table in his fine way and crying out that the young officer was but a poor soldier, indeed, if he possessed not the strategy and gallantry to drive away the enemy and capture the fortress, with such a prize to win. So much had my general of encouragement to give, and so greatly did it please the young officer to look deeply into the darkness, that we at the headquarters had pitifully little sleep, although, as the good heaven showed us, we needed it greatly. I have often thought it strange that they should

have chosen this night to talk in this strange fashion. There are many things in the South which we do not well understand, monsieur—things which one does not see or hear or feel, but which are, nevertheless, about one always, and with which one must assuredly reckon.

"Next day the tribesmen stood. Very early we came upon them, so many that they were as ten to our one; strange creatures, who rode like fiends, and brandished banners of black and screamed to their Allah and, to give themselves more ferocity, shot their long guns into the air and rode their horses in circles while they called upon us insults and threats of bad deaths. As ten to one they were, and monsieur must remember that we were then south of Golea, close to the Areg country, which, because of the great heat and the lack of cover, is not good for our manner of fighting. Yet my general clapped his hands like a boy with delight, and as for the young officer, his eye was never so bright, his jests never so witty. He was with the Zous Zous, stripping off their packs and shaking their great sword bayonets loose; he was with the little cannon now, holding up their open mouths for the first time since we left the city, and ready to begin their 'sp't—sp't—sp't'—the little sound which means that Allah's children are to go to him in large companies; and when the real battle came there he was at my general's side, so brave, so gay, sitting so lightly in his saddle we would have thought him ready for a morning frolic in the park. 'Shall we not begin the comedy, my general?' he laughed. 'I wait the *dénouement*.'

"All day we fought with them, those tribesmen, who came riding at us like great clouds of thunder and sped away before the 'sp't—sp't—sp't' of the little guns and the long, steady roar of our infantry, like drops of rain blown by the wind. All day long we fought with them, when it was so hot that our ambulances found many dead with neither the mark of the bullet nor the ugly wound of the lance to tell why they

had stopped fighting; all day, while our wounded bit mouthfuls of sand and the tribesmen gave us taunts of a hell in which we who were unhurt should suffer even worse; and still my general clapped his hands at the work and the young officer jested of the *dénouement*. Ah, it was a day which I remember.

"But, just before the evening, we, who had fought so long that we were greatly wearied, came into peril. It was not that the tribesmen threw themselves so madly against the place where my general sat, for although they had with them a Mullah who made them spells of triumph, we were strong enough to hold them thus, but there was the cunning of their savagery which inspired them to take us in our rear, even while they made so much of tumult and desperation at our front that we thought them in the climax of their fury there. Very cunning they were in their flanking of the little sand hills, which seemed hardly concealment for a dog, but few could deceive my general—at war. Perhaps he saw the flash of a lance; perhaps a *burnous* fluttered where there had been no *burnous* before; perhaps, like the great Napoleon, he had the unspoken word from nowhere to tell him certainly the place where the battalions must be. Who can tell? As soon as the tribesmen themselves, ne knew the point of the attack.

"'Ride,' he said to the young officer. 'Tell Lanier he must turn a section of his guns to welcome messieurs, our friends, from the other side.' And he gave him an order which should bring the little cannon and the Chasseurs à Pied, who were not then engaged, into a position where they could kill the tribesmen with great ease.

"The young officer wheeled his horse. Between my general and the major of artillery there was a place where many bullets flew. The young officer knew this and it caused him to laugh. My general knew it and he did not laugh. He put his hand on the young officer's bride arm.

"'For France, *mon ami*!' cried my general.

"'For her,' said the young officer more softly.

"Has monsieur beheld a man fall from a horse at the full gallop? For the most part they throw their arms in the air and make many unpleasing movements before they strike. But he, the young officer, went as bravely, as gaily, as though it were an exercise he loved. There he was, dashing for the guns, and—pouf—he lay stretched upon the sand, very straight and very still.

"My general gave one great cry and away he went, my general to the help of his favorite aide, and I, his orderly, that I might be in my place when the time came. And we knelt over him, forgetting something of the bullets which went by, and for the first time I heard my general sob.

"'*Mon ami*,' he begged, '*mon enfant*, speak to me.'

"But the young officer did not speak. He only smiled at my general with a smile of such sweetness as I have never seen on the face of a man, and although no word came from his lips, he told us both that he desired the locket in his tunic. My general drew it out—the tiny locket upon its thread of spun gold—lying so close to his heart. My general opened it and held it before the young officer's eyes, and again the

young officer smiled the smile of great sweetness.

"Then suddenly my general, holding the locket, sprang to his feet with a leap like that of an animal. He tore the locket from the young officer's neck and hurled it far out toward the tribesmen, and a sound came from deep in his throat such as I pray monsieur may never hear. And with his heavy boot he stamped upon the young officer's face. Again and again and again with heavy boot he stamped upon the young officer's face, making all the while the awful noises deep in his throat, until I, being so overcome with horror that I forgot the discipline, fell upon him and dragged him away.

"Yet, monsieur, this is wonderful; the face—the poor face of the young officer still smiled!

"I, who was but a private soldier then, and am now the owner of this restaurant, do not know the riddle. I did not see the inside of the locket. My general left the army, left France, left behind him his ribbon. Once a week he comes to me for his dinner. We do not speak of campaigns, but it is becoming that I should give him the salute, even though when I do so I see again that smiling face, as I saw it last on the day in Areg country. My general of brigade never smiles."

GRIEF

By GILBY C. KELLY

THERE'S a death more of death than the breaking of clay;

There's a night more of night than the setting of day;
When its victim is love death can boast of its sting,
And the night of the grave has no gleam in its wing.

When the heart's unbetrayed, though its idol be broken,
There are vigils unseen and avowals unspoken.
'Midst the gloom of the tomb, stars in blessing arise,
On the keeping of trysts that the Day God denies.

THE QUESTION

By THOMAS GRANT SPRINGER

IN the pale, waning flush of old passion,
As the glow of illusion wears through,
What phantom of dreams can we fashion
Love's warm, rosy dawn to renew?

When gray Commonplace comes to smother
The rapture Time kisses to death,
We must find something more in each other
Than the fires we fan with Love's breath.

Can we go down the highway together
With arms intertwined in the storm,
Harking back to the first golden weather—
Twin hearts with its memory warm?

When our lips of the kisses grow weary,
Will they smile at the clasp of a hand?
Will we sink to a consortship dreary
When Time wears the gold from the band?

Can I be both your comrade and lover?
Shall you be both my mistress and friend?
May a mantle of charity cover
The illusions that break ere the end?

So I muse when our arms drop asunder
Still warm with our loving embrace—
And I fearfully ponder and wonder
At the smile of the Sphinx on your face!

REQUIEM

By J. CLARKSON MILLER

THE knell of poesy is rung
By bells of burnished gold;
The end of art, the reign of greed,
In clanking coin is told.
The sordid grasping of the new
O'ershades the love of old.

"THE LADY"

By ANNE WARNER

BEING shown into the drawing room and asked to be seated, Deeever walked to the large divan that stretched across and before two windows, and sat down.

The room was large and irregularly shaped; a certain dark, rich, reddened hue—something like that of drying blood—prevailed, and there was a profusion of shadowed gold, pictures unrevealed because of the lack of light, and the throbbing ghost of an interesting life that must have been or the room could never have survived with its echo. Deeever, looking about him, felt all this, but felt it only in the vaguest way, for he was so filled with trouble and perturbation over the errand that had brought him, that all his other perceptions were for the moment dulled.

It was a wretched errand, an errand of misery and painful import. Why do boys do these things? Why do thoughtless women, to minister to their own vanity, bring all the future of a family into jeopardy? Why do fathers, whose own lives have been of straight aims and upward pressure, have to go to see that fearfully trying person popularly termed "the lady" and thus have no choice except to be dragged through mud at the end? Deeever nearly groaned just there, and his heavy white mustache smothered a painful line that quivered in its death.

As he sat he could see down the hall, for the maid had left the curtain parted. It was a shadowy hall, just as the room wherein he sat was shadowy. He thought as he looked that the whole apartment was as hushed as if death

had entered there. He found it difficult to reconcile the still twilight with what he had heard of "the lady" and her light and laughter. But as he started down the hall he heard the quick snap of a jewel case, and the knowledge that she was even then arraying herself to produce an effect, buoyed up his disgust—trode down his wonder—showed him that she was, after all, just what he had thought.

He heard her in the hall then and rose to his feet. Then she was in the door, and he advanced to meet her. Of course, he was curious as to what she was like—this idol of his son's existence—and yet he was startled into a sort of chill calm when he found himself actually looking into her face. She had dark eyes which showed that she had been weeping, but he hardly saw them, for, as he extended his hand in response to an outstretched gesture on her part, she bent her head and kissed his fingers, and as he withdrew them in astonished confusion he felt them freshly wet.

"Sit down," she said unsteadily, and turned and sat down herself in an unconventional position, constrained as that of an Egyptian goddess, her hands hanging on either side of her. "It's very good of you to come," she said; "it's very kind of you. I have often wanted to know his father. He is so proud of his father."

Deeever did not speak. He was looking at her and trying to make her out in the dim light. She was not good looking, and she was very small and slight; her hair was prematurely gray, her dress was simple and all black. She must have been putting off her

jewels when the case snapped, for she wore none now.

"What time are you going?" she asked him.

"My train leaves Charing Cross at six," he said. To his surprise he found a difficulty in speaking—his throat was dry, as if her quiet, mournful gaze had scorched him through.

"It was so good of you to come," she said again. "I asked him to plead with you. It was the only way, you know; you never could have felt entirely easy over him otherwise. And uneasiness is so hard to bear."

She was not looking at him. Her gaze was on the clock. His eyes followed hers.

"We have quite half an hour," he said, and felt his mouth to be as dry as his throat.

"Yes, half an hour," she repeated with a sigh. "Yesterday at this time it was he and I who had just half an hour; today it is you and I. If I lived through the half-hour yesterday I can very well live the half-hour today. The half-hour yesterday was so hard. I could have taken him from all of you so easily, and—sitting just where you sit now—he looked so well worth taking. Of course I never meant to take him—I have never desired anything in regard to him that you would not have desired yourself—but it was very hard yesterday to think that we sat here together and were never to meet again on earth, so much as we have meant to one another."

She raised her hands and clasped them in her lap. "But why did you do it?" she said, suddenly turning her eyes directly toward his face. "Or, if you wanted to do it, why did you do it in such a cruel way? How could it be that a man of your age should know so little—should dare such risks? Why didn't you write to me and tell me your wishes and let me break it off in such a way that he would never have suffered? Then I need not have suffered either; then no one need have been distressed. Did he never lead you to believe that I was clever? Did you think that a man such as he had chosen for his friend a

woman who was bad—or frivolous—or a fool? Why didn't you come to me? That is why I so wanted to see you today—just to ask that. I wanted to see you—to speak to you—to have you see me and hear me; and then, after this, I promise never to trouble you again."

She spoke in a low, even tone, neither hurried nor excited, but painfully penetrating in its tenseness.

"You do not believe me," she went on; "you do not trust me. And yet I shall convince you of my truth before you leave this house. You are looking at me and seeing in my very quietude and earnestness a menace to him and his future. It is too bad in you, for I do not deserve it. All that he has said of me is true. He knows that it is true. He knows that I am true. He knew yesterday that the good-bye that we spoke with a smile and a hand-clasp was final. It is hard, when he believes, to be so hard put to it to convince you. Don't you see that to prove him worthy I must prove myself worthy of him? Don't you see how you drive me to drive myself to untold lengths, or else admit that I am what you think me—not what he thinks me? Don't you comprehend how desperately a woman must be pressed who is in my position?"

Deever looked at her and felt his eyes to be as dry and hot as his mouth and throat.

"I don't understand you," he said.

"Not yet, perhaps," she said, "but you will. To understand me is very simple. You have only to think of him and of what he is to understand me perfectly. The difficult thing is to see how you could ever misunderstand. You knew him—you knew how you had brought him up—you knew how clean and true all his life and motives were. How could you think for one instant that such a man would fall into so common an error as that which you attributed to him? Does a man who gives way to an evil infatuation continue happy and contented with a few hours' conversation every second year? Does a man who loves a woman go forward in

life planning a future with some other woman—looking forward to it?"

She put up her hands and drew two tears away from her eyes with her forefinger.

"Oh, I am very unhappy," she said; "not for myself, believe me, but for him and for you and for this world that thinketh evil in spite of the greatest good pleading to enter in."

"I am sorry—" the father began.

"Not for me," she said quickly; "sorrow for him. I sorrow for you because it must be so. I know that you meant to do right, but God alone knows why you were permitted to be so blind. How did you dare throw for such stakes? If you thought my influence evil, how came you to stake his welfare on my will? You left it to him to break with me. Did you never think that if I was a woman with whom he should break, I would never allow a break? You called me bad to him, and counted on my goodness all the time. You thought he must be parted from me, and gave him completely into my hands and left it for me to part us."

She stopped again and drew two other tears from her eyes.

"You don't know what chances you took. Have you had so slight experience as not to see that I, and I alone, have saved him? When he spoke to me of your wishes, and I realized what you had done, I shook with terror. Yes, that is quite true; I trembled so that I was fearful that he would see the trembling. If you had written me, had warned me, had let me make some preparation, had given me time to array myself on your side. . . . But you sent the battle to me, blindfolded. Merciful heaven; what a minute was that! How I had to seek for words to justify your arraignment of myself! Fancy what it was when he and I both knew how clean and white a thing was our connection, to have to uphold your view of it to him. You'll never know what a crisis came then. You see I *had* to be on your side—I had no desire to be on any other—but you swept all logic out of the question by declaring me dangerous

and asking me to prove it by being still more good than ever. Do you think that anyone would care for a friend who did not wish his welfare? I wish it as earnestly as you wish it yourself. From the first hour of my knowing him, I have never wished for anything as much as I wished him well."

"Ah, and there is just the—" Deever began.

"—Danger?" she asked. "You were going to say danger, were you not? Don't say it. There never was any danger until you made it; there never would have been any danger if you had not made it. Oh, I could have wept tears of blood when I saw the mischief that you had wrought; it was in his eyes for the first time. Think of it—put there by his father, by his own father! And think what a position you put him in! Think what you made of his ideals! Has there been nothing in your life to prove to you the better part in this world? Do you really believe—as you told him—that friendship is not for men and women? I am sorry—so sorry—for you, if that is so, because I was his friend, and nothing would ever have come to tighten or loosen that bond, had you left us alone."

Deever sat still. Tears were rolling down her face now, and she no longer attempted to dry them.

"You ought to know that he differs from most men," she said, weeping, yet speaking steadily enough. "You see, you do not measure what he is; there is a quality in him that most men lack utterly, and that only a few possess at all. If you know what I mean, I need only tell you that he is of the Sixth Race. Those people demand something quite out of the ordinary and quite aside from the rules of usual life. They are a step further on toward spirituality; they want something that very few can give—sympathy in their undeveloped upward strivings. I gave him that, and that was the bond between us. That was my power over him—that was my hold on him; through me he struggled toward his higher self. He knew it and I knew it. That I was

older—that I was not beautiful—did not count at all. All that counted was the continual uplifting of his good ambitions. I say nothing to you of my life, because I have no life except in others. I don't exist except for others. I don't desire or pray except for others. I was ambitious for him, to teach him to learn, to set before him all that he must be, to show him the great lines on which life can be lived. I had influence with him through the force of my unselfishness. I had good influence with him because he was good and I was good."

She rose and came now and sat down upon the sofa by Deever, stretching her clasped hands straight down upon her knees. Her black gown fell around her almost like a shroud as she sat thus, and her face took on the despair of the Madonna's at the foot of the Cross.

"And now what have you done? You have ruined it all. You have dragged into his mind an idea that was never there. I was an angel to him, and you have made me a woman. As soon as I saw him I saw that mischief had been done—he was changed. I sat there cold—cold as death—and tried to think quick enough to save him. It didn't matter for me—nothing mattered except for him. I could have gone on so well alone—but he knows now that he is alone; he never guessed it before. And he suffers now; he never suffered before. Why did you do it?"

The last words burst from her in a wail. And then she hurried on: "That is what is the worst—that he knows and must suffer. And because he is the best man I know, he must suffer doubly. Because he was equal to our friendship he must be lonely, too; lonely with a horrible soul hunger which is a thing wholly apart from bodily pangs. If you had let us alone he would have married in a year or two and been happy. My influence would never have ceased and never have troubled. But now the veil is rent, and you have made me human in his eyes. As I said before, you have taught him that I am a woman; you have pushed him over the danger line; you have thrown all the

burden of his future on me and torn from me the strength with which to bear it. How could you do it? How could you dare to do it? Don't you know that today he could be mine if I had chosen to take him from you? Don't you know that such influence as grows and feeds on purity is infinitely more powerful than any that is bred in vice? Can you think what I am—what I had to be—to make him accept your decision? One evil breath and he would have been lost to you. You had presupposed me guilty and he knew that I was innocent; where would the balance lie in such a scale? He had always thought of me as remote, to be worshiped; you told him that I was close and yet not to be touched. What instincts would that arouse in any man?"

Deever put his hands before his face. She continued to stare and speak in the sad, steady monologue of relentless sorrow.

"It is over now. It is all over. He is gone and I shall never see him again."

"But—" the father began quickly.

"No—" she said quietly, "it must be as I say; I shall never see him again. You have left me no choice. He cannot think of me as he did; in the flesh I can never guide him spiritually now. You meant to do right, and I must carry out your plan instead of my own. I think that mine was the better, but I yield to you. I must prove my truth, and the only way to do that is by ceasing to be a woman in his eyes."

She rose straight up and stood with her back to him.

"Wait a minute," she said, standing so, and then walked out of the room.

Deever drew a long breath. "I'll send him to India for a year," he said, and was conscious of a fearful heaviness of heart.

Again he waited, looking around upon those hushed and reddened shadows. The air was heavy with his uneasy suspense. Reflection as to what she was or what it all might mean had not had time to form and face to the fore when she returned with a letter in her hand.

"This is for him," she said; "give it

to him or withhold it, just as you please; it will not matter."

She held it forth. He had risen, and now he took it into his hand. "What shall I say to you about all this?" he asked quite gently.

"Say nothing," she said; "why should you say anything? You have done what you thought right. Who can do more than that? We must all live according to our lights, not according to the cross-light of others. You have done as you thought wisest; I have adapted my view to yours because I recognize an immutable law which rules us all in ways we might not choose yet cannot but obey. The only thing that hurts me is that you still hold me in distrust. And yet, I can only say once again, I was harmless—I shall remain so, and I will prove it." She smiled rather sadly. "As if I ever wanted what I could not have," she said; "as if the bond between us had ever been of such a nature."

For a moment she stood, gazing directly into the father's eyes, and then again she turned—this time without a word—and left him.

The third instant after chandeliers and windows reverberated with a fierce crash as the report of a pistol cracked the air. Deever leaped to his feet; the maids came running. All met together in the next room.

It was not the lock of a jewel-case which he had heard snap as he sat awaiting her half an hour earlier—it was something widely different. The pity of it! The pity of it!

And "the lady"—that interesting individual who has gained such an unenviable notoriety in her usual part in men's lives—had ceased to be a woman, the danger was over and Deever's son was saved.

And Deever—standing looking down upon what lay there—knew now that "it was good."

When he handed his son the letter the younger man took it and tore it to bits unread. He had listened very quietly to what had been told him, and only said once or twice in a sort of murmured sigh, "You didn't understand. You didn't understand."

When the letter was mutilated beyond all possibility he spread the bits upon the table near by and showed with a gesture that not one bore a scrap of writing.

"You see—so well as that did we know one another."

Then he came to his father and took his hand.

"Listen," he said quietly, but with an undernote of that same vital intensity which she had used; "whether she is dead or whether she is alive matters not at all. What matters is that she *is*. I am ready to do whatever you wish. I always have been. I always shall be. But we will never speak of her again because—dear as you are to me—you do not understand."

Then he took all the bits of paper and went to the window and fluttered them forth to the night. That she was near, he knew well. His mind moved back over it all. And then his mind moved forward in a mighty on-sweep, and he felt her presence in the great wind that rose in his soul. He looked toward his father where he sat, and went to him again and took his hand and pressed it a second time.

And then, without speaking, he left him and went forth into the wide quiet of the night without—where she waited, no longer dangerous.

NEVER AGAIN

BESSIE—And are you fascinated by your fiancé?

TESSIE—Fascinated! You ought to see the cute way he kisses me under my chin.

BESSIE—Yes, it is cute; I taught him that.

DAWN ON A HILL

By KATE MASTERSON

IT was in a world entirely new to both that they met. In different parts of a great city, these two, a man and a woman, unknown to each other until now, had died at the same hour of the same day.

This was Spirit land—a strange, green, fresh place, fragrant with summer, the air suggesting sea and forest and mountain, all in one. It seemed quite proper that they should speak. Convention surely had no place in this clean, new world beyond the stars.

"You must have died this morning," he remarked politely. "I passed out at a quarter to six, just as the night nurse woke up and started to give me a spoonful of medicine that she should have administered regularly during the night."

"I hadn't a nurse, thank heaven," she replied with fervor. "I was killed in a motor accident. There was no pain. It was very quick and neat in every way. The chauffeur and the man with me escaped. They were on the front seat together."

"Ah, the man!" said he. "Then I cannot congratulate you on your escape!"

"Escape?" she asked wonderingly.

"Yes—from life! My death, this morning, was one of the most beautiful things that could have happened. It sounds trite, I know, but I feel like a new man. It is different when you leave someone—"

She laughed gaily. "I left a brute of a husband—the man who was in the car with me. I've been dying to get away from him for years, but didn't have the courage. I feel like dancing. I am so happy to think that Fate

stepped in and gave me a helping hand."

"Poor girl!" he sighed. "And I thought that a beautiful woman never grew tired of life!"

She frowned at the compliment and shrugged her shoulders. "Please don't," she begged. "I got enough of that down there. Nine persons out of ten are tired of living, and if they could end it by pressing a button—anonymously, you know—the population would decrease suddenly by a few million. It takes a great love or a great interest or a great duty to make existence worth while."

"And the simple joys are—"

"For simpletons!"

"You comfort me somewhat. I lived up to a simple duty for years, and it was slowly turning me into a devil. It is lovely to think that in Heaven, at all events, we can escape our duties."

She looked at him curiously. "You don't think this is Heaven, do you?"

He seemed alarmed. "Surely!" he exclaimed with enthusiasm. "Haven't I met *you* here?"

She colored at this, throat, chin, brow—a warm glow like fire on ivory.

"I'm not so sure," she spoke softly.

"I never fancied it would be merely beginning the old game over again."

"Ah, but it isn't the old game. Can't you see? You've left a living torture. I've left a rut—a stupid, wretched rut of a life. I had one of those frightfully good wives—that thought joy was sin and laughter immoral, music and dancing the paths to—excuse me—perdition!"

"Perhaps they are," she hazarded. "Who knows?"

"She wanted to reform me, and I was making concessions all the time, for she was an invalid—one of those women who fancy bad temper is neurasthenia. I used to bribe the doctor to send her off to Europe, but she wouldn't budge. Luckily, typhoid intervened and got me out of the predicament. Oh, it seems good to be here!"

He gave a deep, free, glad breath! "I should have run away long ago," she pouted. "I am beginning to understand what it would have meant!"

"It is harder to run from a woman," he complained. "Besides, there are all the pictures in the papers, and well—have you ever had a picture in a newspaper?"

She smiled sweetly. "I was on the stage before I married," she admitted; "yes, I know how it feels!"

"No newspapers here." He rubbed his hands.

"You can't tell. We've only just come. Lots of editors go—"

"Where?"

"That's it! We don't know! But who'd ever have thought it was like this over there—or rather over here? I can't exactly define what the charm is—can you? It is the lack of something, isn't it?"

"The lack of life, probably," he answered drily. "Life gets too complicated for anyone but a chess champion. It's all a bewilderment—a maze."

"What a beautiful light that is on the hills off there!" she cried, pointing to the horizon. "Suppose we move on and investigate."

He breathed deep, looking at the sky.

"I feel afraid it will all vanish in a dream," he almost whispered, catching her outstretched hand. "Tell me, your—your—late husband—is he good for a long life on earth?"

"I devoutly hope so!" exclaimed the lady spirit, and then, dropping her eyes, "You said your widow was an invalid?"

"Only imaginary. She's probably enjoying herself hugely now in her sorrow, and all the latest things in crape. She was fond of black clothes."

"I shall never recognize him—if he comes here."

"They'll never know us! We've shed our shells. We're like butterflies in the sunshine. Come!"

She trembled, faltering, and said softly:

"Tell me first—who are you?"

He laughed happily like a boy. "Don't you know? I am the man you should have met—and you are the girl I used to dream about when I was a youngster. But we got astray, somehow. We had to go through all that grind on earth—for *this*!"

"But—but—where—are we?"

"We are on the path that leads to the beautiful light on the hill—the dawn! Come!"

WHEN OLD FRIENDS MEET

By LOUISE WINTER

FOR old time's sake,
And seeing it's you,
Let's talk of the past,
With a bottle or two.

And for auld lang syne,
And seeing it's me,
Don't stop at two bottles;
Make it three!

ONE OF NATURE'S NOBLEMEN

By M. M. MACDONALD

FRANCET paused and listened intently. Then she knocked softly on the closed door. Francet was a very careful, a very discerning little maid. And had not her dear Highness sat up for such long hours the night before, gazing far away over the tree-tops? But yes, and there had been tears. Little silent tears that would not be seen; that hid themselves away and glistened softly among her dear Highness's eyelashes. Perhaps—

"Come," sounded sweetly, half inaudibly from beyond the door.

Francet cocked her little flaxen head briskly to one side and entered.

The girl who lay half lost among the spotless linens and laces of the great medieval bed stretched her firm, slender arms above her head with luxurious slowness.

Then she turned lazily toward Francet.

"Good morning, mine handmaiden," she said, with a sunny smile. "And how wags the old world this morning?"

The little maid slipped across the room and dropped on her knees beside the bed.

"Good morning, your Highness," she said shyly, her eyes worshipping. "Did your Highness sleep well; and will your Highness breakfast or bathe?"

"Breakfast," said the girl gaily. "And I shall have it over by that window, Francet, with the birds and sunshine."

Francet wrapped the clinging folds of the blue silk peignoir deftly around her mistress, touching with reverent hands the great braids of ruddy gold that swung down over either shoulder.

The Grand Duchess finished her chocolate and dropped back in her chair with a soft breath of satisfaction.

"Francet!"

Francet paused abruptly, the silver breakfast tray poised accurately between her strong little hands.

"Francet, what are those people doing on the main driveway?"

"Your Highness, it is the triumphal arch they build. Your Highness's wedding is to be the most grand of any. Your Highness—" she paused abruptly.

Her mistress sat stiffly erect, all the beautiful light and happiness gone suddenly from her face.

A knock came at the door.

Francet approached softly.

"Your Highness's letters," she announced timidly. "Shall I put them aside till your Highness has more of the wish to see?"

The Duchess sighed.

"You may leave them, Francet. I—they will help me to pass the morning."

Francet bowed and left the room.

Her mistress sat staring fixedly out into the sunshine. At length she turned and listlessly gathered the bundle of letters into her lap.

Idly she broke the seals and noted the contents of three of them.

The fourth lay face downward. She turned it over carelessly.

The next instant she had sprung to her feet, the letter pressed convulsively to her breast.

"Larry!" she cried gaspingly, "Larry!"

A step sounded faintly in the corridor without. The girl started violently, and thrust the letter among

the laces of her gown. Presently she crossed to the door and drew the heavy bolt into place.

Then she threw herself into a chair and with trembling fingers drew the letter from its travel-stained envelope.

It began abruptly:

Two great endless years have passed, and twice the spring has come to me, whispering softly out of the West. Twice I have fought back that mad, choking longing to go to you, to shut you fiercely in my arms and hold you close against them all.

And always two things have crushed me back, silent and helpless. The thought that perhaps you did not care—not in the way I had at times been wild enough to dream you did. And the knowledge that, even though it were so, I could bring you nothing but needless sorrow by going to you.

Here I am looked upon as one of the fortunate in our great land. There, where birth and blood are the only passports, I should find no place, no level on which to even touch your hand.

And so I had intended to pass silently out of your life just as these two years have gone. Three days ago I read the big headlines telling of your betrothal to a reigning duke. And I was a coward, dear. I couldn't bear the hurt and keep on smiling. So I came away; and today I am back in the old Southern garden. Instead of traveling four thousand miles on the merest chance of seeing you, I have traveled one thousand miles on the certainty of dreaming of you. For here is no court etiquette, no petty officialism to hedge you round. Here you are just you—your breath touching me softly in the blossom-laden breeze—your eyes, deep and pure and true, looking steadily back into mine from the purple heart of every long-stemmed violet. And your voice—your voice everywhere, in the fluttering leaves, in the bird songs, in the clear, mellow tinkle of the old fountain. You greet me from the zigzag wandering pathways, from shaded nooks and vine-hung arbors. Dear, the whole garden sings and sighs of you.

But tomorrow I shall be far away, steaming swiftly back to a great metropolis, to bury myself once more in its bustle and noise and confusion; to try to forget my comrade of those golden summer months—the beautiful, imperious girl from across the seas who sought health in the quaint old Southern garden. Then I did not dream that you were other than you appeared. Afterward, when you had returned to your homeland, and the newspapers discovered and made plain your true name and rank, it seemed that I must always have known—even without the homage and deference shown you by the supposed aunt and soft-voiced, foreign servants. Then I knew why you had seemed so utterly different from the

other women I had known; why, as though governed by some instinctive force, I let you go from me as I did. And I shall always remember you, dear, as you were that last night, standing above me on the old stone steps, the glory of the moonlight all around you. And when you leaned down to me, your eyes misty, and softly whispered good-bye, it seemed that your voice told me all I had longed to hear you say. But when I threw back my head to spring up to you, the pure, level light in your eyes met mine unflinchingly, charged with a gentle compelling force which held me back immovable. And instead of obeying the fierce impulse to clasp all the shimmering whiteness of you in my arms, I dropped on my knee and pressed your slim, cool hand silently, reverently to my face.

You will forgive me, dear. I am saying too much. It is to wish you happiness I am writing, every happiness that the Old World can give—and to tell you, that even though you have passed so irrevocably out of my life, the memory of you will always live; the pure, sweet memory of the only woman I shall ever love.

L.

The girl rose slowly to her feet, her eyes shining with a dim, beautiful light. Twice she walked the length of the great room, the letter pressed softly against her face. Then as she paused before the open casement, the broad driveway, with its throng of busy workmen, lay stretching away before her. For a few moments she stood before it silently, her eyes dark with helpless entreaty; then with a sudden choking sob she dropped to her knees and buried her face in the depths of a great chair. For many minutes she wept, fiercely, bitterly, her breath coming and going in long, shuddering gasps.

An hour later, when Francet answered the summons of her Highness's bell, the Duchess met her with flushed cheeks and strangely bright eyes.

"I have a message, Francet," she said quickly, her tone low and tense. "A dispatch which must go today. I do not care to have Henrich take it. It is very important. And, Francet, it must not be seen, not by anyone! You understand?" She paused and looked deep into the honest brown eyes upturned to hers. "I can trust you, Francet?"

The brown eyes answered with a look of hurt surprise.

"But yes, your Highness."

"If I could only persuade your Highness to take Henrich, also." The old Chancellor pulled abstractedly at his long mustache. "Your Highness will surely see the inadvisability of traveling unattended."

The Duchess's eyebrows went up in lines of haughty inquiry.

"I fail to see anything unusual in my request. One would think I had never traveled incognita."

"It is not that, your Highness. One should not forget that his Grace of Hexe Brendbourg arrives in three weeks, and that your Highness's wedding is but a short month distant. If the Duke your father were only here—" He paused helplessly. "As it is, I am responsible for everything."

"And for that reason I desire you to have the passport prepared." The Duchess spoke with cool authority.

Count Von Hagenstein got nervously to his feet, coughing apologetically. "Yes, yes, of course, if your Highness insists."

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Einsdorf looked up from his desk with a sigh of relief. Here at last was a letter from the absent Duchess. Now perhaps the Duke would cease to abuse him for having permitted the young lady in question to go on her harmless little pleasure excursion across the border. For, without doubt, the letter announced the news of her immediate return to the capital.

The Chancellor rose pompously to his feet, and gathering together the letters, the Duchess's missive conspicuous on top, hurried away to the Duke's apartments.

The Duke growled a greeting and swore at his gouty foot in the same breath.

"Anything important?" he snapped.

The Chancellor bowed.

"A letter from the Grand Duchess Christine Marie," he said suavely.

"Humph!" snarled the Duke. "High

time, I should think. Getting too infernally independent. That three months in America ruined her. Another of your fool suggestions, that was. As if there wasn't a suitable health resort this side of the Atlantic! Here! Read it." He thrust the letter back at the Chancellor as he spoke.

The Count broke the seal and drew the letter forth with a flourish.

He started to clear his throat, but stopped with a jerk that suggested someone had caught him by the windpipe. His eyes stared. His hands shook.

The Duke lunged forward in his chair and snatched the letter from him. He read:

THE PLAZA HOTEL

NEW YORK CITY, N. Y., U. S. A.

TO THE GRAND DUKE OF EINSDORF:

I sail this evening on my husband's yacht for a long cruise in Eastern waters—our honeymoon.

Until two weeks ago I had intended to do what I had always been taught was my duty: to sacrifice myself on the altar of some marriage which would prove of a remunerative nature to Einsdorf. Then something happened. I had a letter. After that I knew that I should go to Larry in spite of everything. Your being in the north country made it comparatively easy. Francet and I arrived in New York on the twenty-second. That day the Grand Duchess Christine Marie Cecile ceased to exist, and Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Williams and maid registered at this great hotel. You will never forgive me. I do not expect it. Your affection for your children has never been a thing to marvel at.

I am writing merely to say farewell; to tell you that I am gloriously happy; and that I have married one of nature's noblemen, the dearest boy in all the world.

CHRISTINE.

The Duke crushed the letter savagely in his big fist.

"Hell!" he shouted at the quaking Chancellor. "Don't stand there sniggering like an old monkey. Pitch her things out of the palace. Burn that—bah!"—he snapped the roll of paper contemptuously to the floor—"and then go and get the Grand Duchess Alixe out of the schoolroom and into long dresses. That dolt of Hexe Brendbourg is the only thing that counts."

A CHANCE MOVE OF FATE

By MARY LUCKE CHALLIS

ON a night in early June Anne Merideth, with such patience as she could muster, was progressing at the rate of two steps in every ten minutes up a long flight of marble stairs leading to the reception rooms of a certain great house in town.

She was young, exquisitely well worth looking at for beauty of person, and by reason also of the latest achievement of a famous Frenchwoman, who, rarely appreciative, had considerably subordinated the effect of her *chef d'œuvre* to that of its wearer.

There were no lines of care in the handsome face Anne turned with such admirable dignity toward the world, but there were those in her heart which were graven deep.

Presently she advanced three steps at once with a little rush, thereby missing her husband in the intolerable crowd that did its best to destroy the creations of its dressmakers by pushing and shouldering each other with a disregard of politeness worthy of a second-rate football crush.

As she reached the last step, she found herself face to face with a man who had evidently given up the struggle to reach his hostess or to return against the tide.

He stood at the angle of a wide recess, facing the upward stream in the center of the stairs.

With uninterested eyes he scanned the surging faces, then his own changed its expression swiftly as Anne rose up out of the current almost into his arms.

At sight of him she flushed a very little, but as his hungry gaze caught and held her own, she paled to the whiteness of her dress and the cold flame of her diamonds burned with an

unearthly effect as of witch fires on marble.

His face was too bronzed to betray any change of color, except where the lines near his mouth and a deep one between his brows whitened as the facial muscles relaxed with the shock of her coming.

She met the pain and accusation in his deep-set eyes with so frank and involuntary a sorrow in her own, that he, knowing from childhood her rare reticence, stepped forward impulsively. Such involuntary self-betrayal meant so much. Mechanically she let her hand lie for an instant in his, which gripped it strongly.

He drew her out of the crowd into the space that led to a draped balcony. Explanations may be banal, but at times they are inevitable, and impulse an irresistible force to be blindly obeyed.

With no thought of the hackneyed nature of their grief they stood face to face in the soft light of Chinese lanterns and half across the threshold of a wide window.

On one side of them was the moonlit sky, over which raced white dappled clouds on a breeze from the sea. On the other an atmosphere of dying flowers and the dead perfumes that mimic them, moving to and fro in languid gusts.

The penetrating scent seemed to mount to their brains, stimulating them into action.

"It was—it is incredible!" the man said, breaking a little wildly into the silence of their unhappiness. "I have raged against you, Anne, and yet, seeing you now, I know by your face some deviltry has been at work. It isn't the face of a woman who has done a

dastardly thing. I know you so well. Who did it? You owe me that much. I won't go to the dogs; that I owe to you. No man who loved you as I do!"—he laid deliberate stress on the tense—"could insult you so. I nearly did—but I waited—I had a presentiment. My God! Anne—"

His face was almost gray now. A big vein stood out on his forehead and little drops of moisture beaded it. It was the face of one tortured, and it wrung and twisted the heart of the woman who looked on it. She could see a pulse beating heavily in his throat. Her eyes filled slowly and her mouth quivered for an instant, but with the inherited control of a fine race of women and her own strength of character she said quietly, while her own throat ached and her pallor frightened him:

"I will send you the letters tomorrow that will show you everything. You can do with them as you choose. I can say nothing—except that you will see I was scarcely to blame. He—knows nothing. Blame my pride, if you will, but I was so bitterly hurt."

The simple words seemed inadequate to express the suffering that for an instant leaped into her face and voice.

He was silent, because utterance before her was impossible, and useless as yet. He listened with clenched hands to the almost inaudible rustle of the satin and lace of her dress as her breast rose and fell in quick breaths.

He knew that nothing in his whole life had equalled or ever could equal the shrewd agony of temptation that the sound forced on him. But not by the faintest movement did he betray it, though with a bitter passion of love he strained his ears to listen to it.

When she spoke again an instant later she had regained her self-possession.

"Thank you for saying you would not wilfully spoil your life. Please promise me that." Her gaze was direct, half command, half prayer, but he knew that she had veiled her heart lest it should look out at him through her eyes again.

He gazed into them with a wild worship, a passion in his own that she dare

not meet. He saw that she closed her hands tightly on a chair in front of her as she looked past him into the clear night.

"I won't, Anne! I won't—if I can help it. But what am I to do without you? You have been my conscience, my 'little mother' since you tied up my cut fingers when you were a little thing of five. And I have loved to remember you, grave, sweet little soul, and to think I was decent enough even then to know what you were worth. You always belonged to me, and I to you. There never was a day I haven't loved you."

Anne Merideth's heart almost broke at the sound of his voice and the memories it brought back. He was not perfect, this man; he had always been impulsive, sometimes not overwise, but he had given her a wealth of reverence, of love that had kept him clean and straight in a difficult life, and he was her own boy, always for best or worst. She loved him for the simplicity of his ideals, so high and almost impossible, that he said he had found in her, and up to which she had tried to live that she might not fail him in any sense.

Through all his phases as boy and man she had been his tower of strength, and he her one thought. She gloried in the fact that even into his profession she had entered in a way, for she understood his ambitions, had nerved him against disappointments, helped him with timely suggestions that bore good fruit, and had learned all technical things he could teach her, that she might follow his career the more intelligently.

"Anne, forgive me; I should have been silent, but ours was not a ball-room dream. It is our whole lives that we give up."

She turned and looked at him.

"Don't break the life we have made so successful. Go on, and though I cannot help you now, let me know you haven't thrown away . . ." She could not finish what she would have said; she only looked at him, the courage that meets death with a bravery that can smile when facing it heightening the beauty of her dear face to a great

nobility. It was so that he always remembered her.

An hour later she passed him at her husband's side, going out to their carriage, but she did not see him or the look of grim despair that followed her.

She was still very pale, but she spoke with a pleasant courtesy and interest to the man who, very little taller than herself and fifteen years her senior, guarded her through the crowd so carefully.

He had a kind, keen face, with good eyes and a notable dignity of bearing.

"At least she has chosen a brilliant soldier and a gentleman. But he had no right—she was mine; and if it were not for what she is, I could go headlong to the devil tonight—only to forget."

The wringing physical pain at his heart, the fever of hot anger, brought back to him that of a gunshot wound which had tortured him in an Indian field hospital.

Rather than go to his room that night he walked until long after dawn, until he was exhausted.

At dawn Anne Merideth closed and sealed a thick packet of letters. In it were no words of her own, only the record of a dastard thing done shamelessly. She held it half hesitantly, looking at its superscription.

She was blaming herself for having spoken of the letters within it, but though Anne's was a rare nature it was very human. For once a flame of white anger was burning up all its deep tenderness, its great rectitude. There was in her an almost savage strength of purpose not to leave the betrayal, the thwarting of their love, unexplained, unavenged.

"We were so absolutely happy, and I was so nearly his wife. I should have been in another month—he must know the way in which she forged and lied to win him for herself."

For an instant tears rushed up to cool the bitterness that choked her. Then she went to bed to lie awake dry-eyed until the world was astir again.

Before the next morning Frank Repworth received the packet and saw where, blurring his own name, Anne's tears had fallen on it. Locking himself into his room he read how reckless and passionate an unscrupulous woman can be in her attempt to gain her own ends.

Her devilish devices had succeeded. But it was all so miserably unoriginal, this wrecking of Anne's life and his own, that it provoked a bitter laugh flung at the hackneyed thing which had broken the most idyllic love God had ever let any of His creatures know.

Out of his intolerable pain surged up a wild exultation that Anne, whom he loved so passionately, had proved worthy of his trust. She had indeed been driven into a corner, the pride she had deprecated her only safeguard against the ingenuity of incredible malice and set design.

His absence abroad had helped the clever slander; that and the unavoidable postponement of their marriage in consequence of an important secret mission. The letter beseeching her forgiveness for this had never reached her. It had been deliberately suppressed.

Then Anne's pride, her ignorance of life, and a good man's sudden prayer to her to marry him, led her into too hastily assuming a yoke that she could not loose unless death should set her free. He choked the potential murder of the thought and read on.

"I'll make the best of life without her, but it will be worse than death," he said aloud as he laid down the last letter, with a groan.

Two days later he had reckoned with the other woman. He did so with a cold, cutting courtesy of speech that stripped her of every rag of self-delusion.

Then he went his way into the night, as far as Anne was concerned, for many years.

CHAPTER TWO

At long intervals Anne heard of Frank Repworth as a "rising"—a "risen" man. Every time she saw his name as men-

tioned in dispatches or as receiving honors at the hands of his sovereign, she exulted that he had kept his promise to her so loyally. She knew how little the lust of medal-hunting had to do with it, for she remembered his first decoration, won as a boy of twenty-two. It was given for a forced march under circumstances of great difficulty, with a mixed lot of castes among his men and no possible means of their cooking independently. A risky business at best, Frank had carried it through without a hitch, and had raised the siege of an outlying coast fort after a march of a hundred miles along a glaring beach without fresh water and over loose sand.

When he came home on leave he went straight to Anne, bringing her his medal and its two bars.

"You must keep it for me. I only wanted it for you," he said, on fire with delight at her passionate pride in him.

So she had kept it for weeks until one day he needed it in a hurry for a great function of some kind. Then there was a wild scramble to get it to him in time, and much laughter at his forgetfulness of all but Anne.

She still kept locked away with her jewels the miniature medals that he insisted on sending her as he won them. But she had never opened the case he designed for them since that night at Wellington House.

Once or twice in many years they met, when the chances of soldiering East or West caused their separate paths to cross for the moment.

Each time he looked eagerly for signs of the deterioration, the bitterness or discontent that marred the faces of so many of Anne's contemporaries, and a great joy, as well as sorrow, gripped him when he did not find that for which he searched.

What he saw was a beautiful face grown thinner, its softness of young coloring paled almost to transparency; the slender figure more matronly, perhaps, but slender still. It was in her eyes that he found his deepest content.

He doubted if anything more beauti-

ful existed than the depths of their pure serenity, or the sweetness and latent humor of her mouth, firm without a trace of hardness.

He could see that the mystery of her unspoilt womanhood was, if sad at times, a mystery of practical life rendered beautiful by the unforgotten faith and hope of her girlhood.

Anne had held high ideals which he had taken as his own in their youth. Hers were untarnished still; his were darkened, though they were intact.

She found him scarcely altered, though she could see the hardening of certain lines and the loosening of others in his face.

An almost impersonal delight brightened her smile when she bowed to him across the drawing-room of a foreign embassy.

It was the unconscious gladness of her soul, greeting him after so many years, at finding him so little changed. Exactly what she had dreaded she might see she did not define; for the moment she was glad without a shadow on the radiance of her spirit.

That came afterward, when she was alone. The shadow of a deathless past that she knew stood near her always.

That she was strong enough never to turn toward it she knew also, but the restraint made her go even more quietly for a while after Repworth had left Berlin. The third time they met she went down to dinner with him in town.

At first they were silent. Then Repworth said, watching the familiar grace of her handsome hands, the clear outline of brow and cheek, the darkness of her lashes and the jutting waves of her somber hair:

"It is a sweet soundness, a sane mind, that keeps women young. Look round the table, Anne, and see if it isn't rampant egotism and the wish to believe evil of others that kills youth. It scorches all nobility out of their faces."

Self-restraint kept the blood from her cheeks, but not from a quicker beat in her pulses as she lifted her clear eyes to study the other women.

She could not but notice all the

things Repworth had arraigned in them. Scarcely one of the society veterans, young or old, but wore the livery of boredom or an eager hunger for something other than they owned. They looked sideways at their own sex, showing the whites of their eyes like vicious horses.

"It is scarcely fair to judge them without knowing what is behind the masks they wear. I know in some cases husbands are to blame, in others sons and daughters, or the horrors that come of desires and a position beyond their means. But many of them are kind and—"

"Oh, I know you of old, Anne! You always would pray for the poor devil," Repworth interrupted with a smile, and a wrench at his heart.

"Perhaps, but he needs it. I'm sorry for him as represented by people who haven't a generous spirit to help them on their way. No one can stand successfully quite alone, I think," she said.

She could feel that her veiled mention of her husband hurt the man beside her. To her the air was tense with a nervous pain. Then the finest strings of Frank's nature responded to her touch, and he said, meeting her eyes:

"I think that, too, and I am glad that it is so."

After that night Anne was conscious of a greater peace, because she had borne testimony to the nobleness of the man whom she had learned to understand and to respect beyond measure.

Colonel Merideth in his busy life, absorbed in his profession and trusting her absolutely, was not an exacting husband. Anne often realized that the lion in her path was more often solitude than overmuch of his society, solitude in which a weaker woman would have eaten out her heart in vain memories.

Anne was too wise in her reverence for past love and present duty to do this. She was often faulty, as all human creatures are; faulty in minor ways that irritated her sense of proportion. She knew that she was able to do

some things which were great; why could she not succeed in those lesser ones which are the thorns and pebbles that tear us and cause us to stumble blindly?

But largely she lived her life with a grace of body and mind that caused her face to be a mirror of the fair soul within. When her husband was made a baron, and became Lord Merideth of Merideth, she was glad for his sake, but in her heart, for a fleeting instant, she knew that she would rather have shared the honor of Frank Repworth's military knighthood, just gained by him.

During the Colonial Governorship that closed Merideth's active career, their only child, a son, died at Eton, and a year later Anne returned to England a widow, broken in health and spirit for a time.

CHAPTER THREE

For months Anne lived in lonely seclusion at Merideth Court, in Yorkshire, arranging and managing the affairs of the great estate that, unentailed, was her own for life. One morning she came down to breakfast to find lying on the table a letter that for the first time broke the ice freezing her soul into a chill solitude.

After reading it she sat, chin on hand, gazing across the table out of an open window to where wooded Meridale and its brawling trout stream glittered in the sun after a heavy spring shower.

Thoughts kept at bay for months seemed to rise from it and crowd into the room.

Death, illness, a great sorrow for her boy, and a sense of loss when her husband died that almost amazed her, then the necessity for much work and a long voyage, had scattered all thoughts but those touching her life from day to day—and a sense that others must not be entertained as yet.

England reached, she hoped for letters which she believed must await her there.

When she did not find them, and

month after month went by without bringing them, she shut herself into an icy armor of restraint.

She took up the study of music, of Italian, as well as the active work of the estate, and these things and a strong will had, as she believed, sent all other thoughts and desires to sleep.

But Kathleen O'Hara's letter wakened them again, and to be aroused suddenly from sleep is often as painful as the return from consciousness when one has fainted.

DEAREST ANNE:

Do, like a dear soul, come up to town and see me. Here I am in a big, old house in Bloomsbury, comfortable in an old-fashioned way with Molly to look after me. I'm painting for dear life and getting on at last. But I want to see your beautiful, dear face again.

I was bewildered in this smother of a town after Ballyhatch, but Molly knows it, maybe better than she does her prayers, and takes care of me like a fine old dragon. With a hundred thousand welcomes waiting for you,

Yours with all my heart,

KATHLEEN O'HARA.

P. S.—Have you heard that Frank Repworth has refused a viscounty? Is it true, do you think? What ages it is since you went to that fancy ball at the castle, and you were Una to his Red Cross Knight! It's funny I never saw him. You were to have sent me his photograph, but when did I ever see anything in that old gaol at Ballyhatch?

The long repressed thoughts were out at last, clamoring to be heard, and with them a new dread. Why had Repworth never written to her when Neville died, and again when Lord Merideth's death had left her—free?

At intervals had come to her a card, a photograph of some out-of-the-way place into which Frank had wandered on leave, something that she knew was meant to show her she was forgotten.

With dry, hot eyes and an ache at the back of her throat she asked herself, why had he not sent her even so vague a message as those had been? And most sickening dread of all, why had he refused the title offered him? She knew how well he had earned it.

For a while she sat in the cool spring wind, forgetting breakfast and the other letters beside her plate. The

neglected urn steamed impatiently, then slowly cooled, while she let herself go down into a sea of sorrow.

On the ledge of the window flew a robin, bold, confident, inquiring. Seeing her, he recognized a friend, and hopped on the writing table, chirping sharp notes of question, then as in reproach lifted its head and trilled a song of defiance of this breach of good comradeship. Anne, awakened by it, did not start, so greatly had the habit of long self-control governed her.

With the slow grace that the robin loved, she filled her hand with crumbs and held it out to him, palm upward, calling him to come to her.

The bird turned his bright eyes from side to side, could see nothing requiring caution, then with a swift little rustling flight lit on her outstretched arm. As he hopped down to her hand and picked daintily at the food therein, Anne watched him through tears that fell drop by drop.

The fearless atom of young life set every nerve in her aquiver. Yet in the end it calmed her, and when at the close of its meal the robin whetted its beak on her soft wrist, a curious little thrill of pride ran through her and dried her tears.

"I shall take it as a better omen, Dickie. I will go up to town and see Kathleen. It will do us both good," she said, watching her small friend fly away to the window where he sang his grace to her very lustily in the sunshine. Anne re-read the warm-hearted scrawl and laid it down with a sad smile.

Listlessly she made a pretense of breakfasting on cold coffee and brown bread and butter. Most of the last she took to the window and crumbled on its ledge and flung out to the terrace steps.

She gazed into the sunshine doubtfully.

For once spring was worthy of its poetic reputation, and her gardens were lovely in their young greenness.

For five years she had seen but little of London and she was not in love with the idea of going there. She was out of tune with its soulless scramble for the apples of dust and discord. She had

never been really in touch with the crowd who find their Mecca therein.

She hesitated for a whole day, dreading the break in her quiet and ordered existence. Then, in a fit of disgust for such unusual vacillation, she started the next morning.

She kept thought at arm's length persistently, stifling it with the feminine device of lightening her heavy mourning and a long business interview with her lawyers.

For some strange and subtle reason, after leaving them, hope raised its head again and as she drove through the thronged and sunny streets the pale refinement of her handsome face set in its gossamer blackness of cloudy chiffons attracted attention more than once, for it was young and happy once more.

Thrills of well-being came to her and passed away, leaving her half afraid of this sudden and causeless pleasure in the mere fact of being alive.

She found Mrs. O'Hara's ancient house in one of the great Bloomsbury squares. Its wide doorway had once been stately and was even now dignified in its dinginess.

As she glanced up at the dining-room windows, a little cold, wandering air crisped her nerves and chilled her for an instant.

Entering, her quick gaze noticed the heavy mahogany doors, the carved banisters and rail of the once palatial staircase. The house was fine still in its quiet decadence, and she thought how she would like to take it and restore its ancient glories.

A tempestuously affectionate welcome, a whirlwind of rustling skirts, of curtains streaming in a June breeze through open windows, and she felt a sudden rush of life again, as Kathleen's warmth seized her and caught her up out of her long self-repression.

The pretty Irishwoman's gay chatter, and the reckless profusion of flowers, heaped wherever they would stand, even to the splendid Adams fireplaces, rounded in her an almost equal gaiety.

Anne realized that her heart was not dead, was not even asleep. It had

been numbed, but was momentarily learning that it kept all its old capacity for enjoyment.

Frank seemed very near to her, and soon she believed the two years of his silence would end, and—

She started out of a dream as Kathleen O'Hara flung a flapping newspaper to her across a table.

"There's the latest news of your old friend," she said in her high, sweet brogue. "And oh, Anne, it's myself will be living on oatmeal and milk for a week, for I've ruined myself entirely for you today. Did you ever see such flowers?"

Anne was deaf to everything but the printed words that seemed to sing in her ears.

General Frank Repworth has just been gazetted to his new appointment. His has been a brilliant and successful career, and we understand the gallant officer has made very good use of the somewhat long leave he has been fortunate enough to obtain from time to time for special expeditions. His independent surveys and explorations have been of inestimable service already and have won him substantial rewards, and his latest work in this line will, we understand, considerably add to his laurels.

Then his silence had been due to absence from England! With unquestioning pleasure Anne let herself drift on the flood of contentment rising within her heart.

Her paleness colored softly with a new, faint flush, caught Kathleen O'Hara's attention, and the clear youth of Anne's dark eyes almost startled her.

"It's the girl of twenty years ago come back, so it is," she said, standing still in the middle of the room to admire Lady Merideth's arresting beauty. "When you came in I thought you looking a bit tired, Anne, but I must have mis-seen you; in this green gloom you're radiant! It's odd, do you know, but you are so like the people living in the flat below me—I'm not meaning the two of them, but the wife, of course. They've only been married a year or so, but there's something of a mystery about them I can't help thinking— As I'm not a journalist, and too busy to be curious, I haven't asked questions, but it was a runaway match and a queer romance

if no worse, I'll wager my best picture. But it's a fairy story that has jangled in the telling, I'm afraid. He's more than good looking, and she is a beauty, but he looks worn and worried, and is away a good deal. She is a queer, quiet creature, forever reading and altering her clothes and hats. Their rooms are lovely, but it's a queer place to come to, I'd say if I was asked. He's kind to her, and sometimes he'll look at her with half his heart in his eyes, as if he loved her and couldn't bear the sight of her. This isn't a house I'd choose if I was rich; that is, not the square; the house is a darlin' place. Mollie's master left it to her with its big carved fireplaces and powder closets and ceilings. It's a mine of wealth to me, so it is. I've made half a fortune out of it already, for my pictures sell now, and lucky it is that they do, for Dennis is a sponge for letting money through like water, and one of us has to make it. So I'm here, leavin' him in Ireland to look after the horses an' hunt an' fish and play at farmin'. He'd die if you took him away from it all, would Dennis, but nothing makes me even bow to dyn'."

The soft, round Irish voice reeled off the rapid words with an irresistible charm, but Anne scarcely listened intelligently. She had dropped the newspaper, and in a big mahogany chair, its high back carved elaborately with armorial bearings, she sat with head thrown back, watching Mrs. O'Hara flitting about her huge, scantily furnished drawing-room and studio with a dreamy absorption. Luckily Kathleen could talk forever unanswered, or even reply to her own questions if need be, so in her quest of mislaid spoons and tea caddy she switched her vagrant attention from Anne to the recesses of an old corner cupboard.

The sun streamed into the room with a dusty radiance, it flamed on the ruddy Spanish mahogany of Anne's chair, and reddened the coils of her dark hair. Against the warm hues of the old polished wood she, in her misty blackness of thin folds falling softly

round her, seemed as one awakening from sorrow to new life and color.

The slippery parquet floor gleamed like water in at her feet and held reflections of red flames and shadow. A tall vase of purple-blue enamel, the glint of a copper bowl, the soft grayness of old silver on an Amboyana wood cabinet and Kathleen O'Hara in sapphire muslin that matched her Irish eyes, pouring tea into old Crown Derby cups stirred every fiber of Anne's esthetic sense of their charm.

Her thoughts went wandering in strange dreams, and she seemed in the few minutes since Kathleen ceased speaking to have lived a lifetime of memories and previsions of the future. Then she aroused herself as two or three other women drifted in, their frills and laces blowing sideways in the riotous little breeze that the opening door called in from the open windows.

For an hour they talked of things entirely alien to all Anne's interests, but she listened and answered courteously. They were evidently impressed by her dignity and beauty, but spoke of her afterward as cold and haughty, when all the while her heart was warm with love and awakened longing.

When they went away Mrs. O'Hara rose impetuously and whirled round.

"Did you ever hear of Brown's chrysanthemum, Anne? No? It's in 'My Lady Nicotine.' Well, read it, then, an' you'll know why I'm distracted! I've promised to water the Robinsons' window boxes downstairs myself. Not that they're famishing for water yet, for they only left this afternoon, but if I don't start the habit of watering them at once I'll be forgetting it. You'll stay to dinner with me, Anne? Mollie can cook so you won't be starved or poisoned. And we'll go down and deluge those boxes as a precaution."

Anne agreed to stay to dinner, but demurred at the idea of invading other people's rooms.

"Bless me! Who's to know it? I want you to see them. It's his taste, I'm certain."

Whisking up a bag containing keys,

the wild soul thrust it into Anne's hands.

"Take them; you'll find the key of their door on an ivory label," she said, standing arrested for an instant from further flight in the doorway.

"I've to go downstairs and tell Mollie we're dining here. You'll find cans and water in their bathroom at the end of the passage. But perhaps I had better let you in."

Talking ceaselessly, the pretty woman led the way downstairs. Anne, following her, seemed the shadow of her figure in its blue spring dress.

As she unlocked the door Mrs. O'Hara said hurriedly, "Take the key, Anne, or I'll be forgettin' it. There! Isn't that a room worth livin' in? But I mustn't wait to tell Mollie; she's fat, is Mollie, and requires time to get round her work. No one will interrupt you, and, for the sake of heaven, water those flowers if you flood and drown them."

And she flew off to the basement. Anne, looking after her, loved her afresh for her wild Irish loquacity. It fitted in so perfectly with her disinclination to say any more than the fewest of words. Moving as she did in a curious dumb dreaminess, Kathleen's charm of person, the old-world fascination of her lofty rooms, their light, their shadow and fugitive gleams of color satisfied her completely. Then she walked into the center of a room equally large and high, its tall carved mantelpiece, panels, windows and doors of the best Grinling Gibbons period. Between the panels hung Spanish leathers, whose orange and gold gleamed faintly in the semi-twilight of the half-closed shutters, through which streamed rays of dusky sunshine. Something about the arrangement of the room seemed curiously homelike and familiar to Anne.

She turned slowly from side to side. A burning tide of color swept her from head to foot. It was almost exactly the replica of a room in her father's house which had been her favorite playground as a child, and her own special sanctuary when a girl. A room

so filled with memories of her own and Repworth's joint lives that she could not bear to enter it since her marriage. Now, with a feverish interest, she noticed the care with which each bookcase, cabinet, chair and table had been chosen to duplicate as nearly as possible the Gibbons room at Warrington. Even their arrangement had been studied to the same end. Anne's heart swelled with a feeling that was sheer terror. She put her hands up to her face. The sleeve of her loose chiffon coat caught in something that fell with a clang and the shiver of splintered glass. Mechanically she turned to save it, and saw a quaint brass frame out of the back of which an old cabinet photograph had fallen. She lifted it and the frame, and took them to the window to put the picture back again if possible without further damage beyond that of the broken glass. What she saw turned her heart, her hands, to ice—a fancy dress group, well posed, of half a dozen handsome, happy young people. All the warm color fell away from her face, leaving it stricken to an utter desolation.

In the forefront of that record of an idle evening's pleasure she herself was seated as Una, a hand on her lion's head. How she remembered that lion skin and their efforts so to pose it that only the head should be seen! Beside her, as her Red Cross Knight, Frank Repworth leaned upon his shield, sword on thigh. His pet name for her, "Una," chosen when they first read Spenser, was written at the foot in her own handwriting, and below was added:

"To Her Own Knight."

Anne did not know that she was sobbing tearlessly as she looked at it. With piteous haste she thrust it into the pocket of her long coat, and laid the empty frame on a writing table near the window. But it was not empty. A girl's face looked up at her with her own eyes. This did not startle her for an instant, because, with the strange wideness and swiftness of vision that a great nervous shock can bestow, she saw lying scattered here

and there several envelopes addressed to F. R. Robinson, Esquire. A receipt acknowledging some library books was signed with the same name. And the handwriting was Frank Repworth's!

As her gaze rested on them she caught up the empty lying things and pushed them into an open drawer, shutting it with a sharp decision that rang through the silent room. This was Frank Repworth's flat. He was living here with another woman . . .

The door opened at her back, and Anne turned to face—herself! A beautiful girl, with her oval face, her heavy hair growing upward in massive, jutting waves from her lovely forehead, her dark eyes clear and wide with amazement, faced her, her lips half parted as if to speak. As people when they are drowning see all their lives rush past them, Anne saw what those two years of Frank's life had been, the only years in which he was really lost to her. She did not need the querulousness of this girl's eyes and mouth to tell her how they had been spent. That was where the likeness failed. Instead of Una's steadfast purity and crystal clearness of expression, Anne saw the shadows, the discontent, of something she dare not define. But she hated herself the next instant for her intuition—her swift suspicion of the truth. She could see that this girl, so exquisitely patrician in appearance, lacked her own self-possession, or the power to deal with a difficult situation.

Steadying her voice with a strong effort, the older woman said to the vision of her own youth:

"I am a friend of Mrs. O'Hara. She asked me to water your flowers, as she was busy, and I am staying here tonight." No one could have resisted the charm of Anne's voice and manner, and apparently the girl did not even wish to do so.

She came forward, stumbling over her long skirt, and looked at Anne curiously. Her eyes were both puzzled and afraid.

Anne bore her scrutiny with a fine poise of kindness and reserve, no hint of the pain tearing at her heart. Her

brain, her mind, her reason were in arms to defend Frank, to shield him from her own condemnation.

"That is kind of you, but it does not matter. What matters is—why are you so like me? Who are you?" the younger Anne said wonderingly. "It is extraordinary. What would Francis say if he could see you?" She seemed to be speaking as if hypnotized. "He loves my face—only my face—never me—that I can swear. I shall perhaps never see you again, and I don't care if you know it, or if you think me mad to speak like this to an utter stranger. But you are not a stranger; I feel as if I had been near you for years. I have hidden it from everyone else, but he does not care enough for me—myself—to find out anything about my soul, and I must have one—or— I love him. He's all I have in the world now, but I hate this room. I want never to see it again. He says it is like a room he once lived in in a great house."

She spoke with a strange mixture of passion and indifference, as if she controlled some strong impulse by force—longing to break out into bewildered anger against a riddle she could not solve, but not daring to do so.

And as surely as if she had been told of it Anne knew the reason why. This girl had no firm ground, no assured position from which to speak of all that was graving lines of discontent and thwarted passion on her young face. The strangeness of this sudden thing that was happening did not occur to Anne—to either of them. It was one of the primitive swift tragedies that strip away all conventions, all so-called probabilities.

"Who are you that you should have come here tonight? Francis sent me back to find a photograph of myself he wanted," the girl said disconnectedly.

Anne looked down at the spoilt frame.

"I am sorry that the glass is broken; my sleeve caught it," she said, with a thread of golden joy running through her low voice. It was for the faded photograph of Una and her Knight

that Frank Repworth wanted it. Then a cold horror of this knowledge cleft her heart like a sword. What could she say, what could she do to end this intolerable thing that had come to her—to them both? All her accustomed worldly wisdom, sweet and swift and wholly adequate, had deserted her. She was a woman stunned and bewildered. Pity, a passionate cold pain and anger were surging blindly within her. And all the while the young, beautiful girl, her strange, fugitive self, was watching Anne with a half-sullen wonder, her indescribable want of subtle good breeding more marked every instant as, embarrassed by the strangeness of the situation, her nerve failed her. It was this fact which pierced Anne's consciousness with its bitterest pang. She would rather that she herself had been lacking than that Frank Repworth should have descended to less—oh, God! Who could explain to her the meaning of this intolerable, incredible thing that he had done? Why had he chosen to live in a room so like that sacred to their own young lives, to torture himself with its dead likeness, to live with this physical replica of herself—who failed in—

Anne only dimly realized these things; she could scarcely think at all. But for the instinct to help Frank as of old, she could not have borne the knowledge forced upon her, or have stayed one instant in the room. But she was too just, too true and dear a woman to scorn this strange, unhappy girl, whose sullen eyes were filling with tears as she watched Anne with a vague pain at her heart that sharpened with every heavy moment. Suddenly she cried out with an awkward, piteous force:

"If only you had been here instead of Mrs. O'Hara, I believe you could have taught me how to win him altogether, how to make him love me for myself. I have never seen anyone like you."

Anne never winced, but the suffering, the irony of torture, was so great she wondered if she could live after it had passed.

Who should know how to teach this

thing if she did not? A strange wish to find the uttermost truth forced her to say quietly:

"But did he not care at first when—" she could not frame the question easily, but the girl leaned forward, catching up her broken words.

"I don't know; I never did know. I am strange, I suppose. I never thought of it, I never asked—only later—and then I was afraid to—"

A sudden weak suspicion dawned in her eyes.

"I can't understand why we are so alike—what does it mean?" Anne saw the wavering distrust flicker, die out, and flame up again. As only Anne could do it when she chose, she swept the faltering question aside.

"When were you married?" she forced her cold lips to say tranquilly. "Have you not had time to win your—husband?" The word seemed to shudder through the twilight room. The girl's beautiful face (her own young face) flushed scarlet, a painful, scorching blush that chilled Anne's blood.

"Two years ago," she said sullenly. Her sorrow and shame were ungracious; it stripped the veneer of her acquired manner from her and left the poorness of the original almost glaringly apparent.

She turned away to the writing table; with a nervous, purposeless movement she took up the heavy brass frame. Anne could see how her hands trembled.

"I did not know this had so deep a space behind it," she said, evidently striving for self-possession. "Did anything fall out of it?"

Anne felt the photograph with frozen fingers; in the heat of the half-closed room she almost shivered with a stealing cold that was mounting to her heart.

"I cannot tell you," she said distinctly, and loathed herself for her evasion of the truth.

The girl, with the flush dying slowly from her face and neck, looked round her perfunctorily.

"Oh! Well, it does not matter," she said, as if glad of a diversion of subject. "We were packing, and Francis—Mr. Robinson—meant to pack this

also, but he suddenly hurried me away and forgot it, I suppose." She fidgeted with the hinged back of the frame, then looked up. "I don't know why I should feel so about you," she said suspiciously; then with a little rush, "You don't know Mr. Robinson?" she asked.

Anne's fingers, hidden in the folds of her dress, closed convulsively on the picture of Una and her Knight.

"No, I do not know Mr. Robinson," she said gravely; and she cried out in her heart that in truth she did not know this man.

"I didn't suppose you would, but I am glad he cannot see you; he would never look at me again." In her eyes was a miserable consciousness of Anne's indescribable, her greater charm.

The woman who could have told her the meaning of her riddle pitied her at that moment with a pain that made her eyes so misty she could scarcely distinguish the drooping figure of the girl, who, however vaguely, had touched the key to that riddle in her bitter little sentence.

"You have youth," Anne said slowly, putting herself on the rack of supreme renunciation. "You love—and you are good." She must keep the faint fire of such goodness as there might be alive forever, if she could do so by any

words of hers. The girl looked up a little wildly, with a pitiful gesture of her hand, but she did not speak.

"Be patient and hope," Anne said. "Keep all that is best in you intact, your beauty of body—and soul—and hope."

Her voice was full and sweet, her face so quiet, so noble, that the girl looked at her with her poor heart in her eyes.

"You have given me a watchword," she cried out, a mingling of strong feelings in her tone—awe and gratitude, passion and wonderful belief. There was an exquisite reawakened gaiety, a softness of color in her face that made her beautiful. But with it all she was not Una.

She came close up to Anne and with an impulsive, unusual grace of action stretched out her hand; in the other she held the broken frame.

Without a word Anne, the light still on her face, all the deepest and finest flame of her great beauty of soul in her eyes, bent forward. With the prescience of her dreadful knowledge held at arm's length, with an impulsive prayer for God's mercy, for forgiveness, for the comfort of all strong pain and tears, she kissed the face that was the reflection of her own. And as she did so she said good-bye to her youth, her hope, her love.

THE man who condones a neighbor's sin is often preparing his own repentance in advance.

KNOWING that money is the root of all evil, most of us are trying to dig it up.

LIFE must be pleasant, so many have complained that it is short.

CONCERNING BOHEMIA AND BOHEMIANS

By JAMES L. FORD

OF the thousands of young men and maidens whose eyes are turned toward New York as a field for the practice of literature or the fine arts, there are very few who have not allowed the imagination to run riot in dreams of a "Bohemia," a mystic land in which talent and genius are held in far higher esteem than wealth and social prestige, and where those with a full purse share generously with their less fortunate comrades. To the sophomore, writing Villon-like verses for his college "Lit"; to the country newspaper reporter fitting himself seriously for a literary career, as Mr. Howells did half a century or more ago; to the young man who feels artistic yearnings stirring in his veins, nothing is more fascinating than this day dream of an ideal society in which even the humblest beginner may meet the men and women who have "arrived"; and where true *bonhomie* reigns, jealousy is unknown, and conversation fairly sparkles with wit and originality.

The sweet girl undergraduate of Vassar or Wellesley dreams of a Bohemia strong in *réclame* and material prosperity, and peopled exclusively by the well-dressed, the well-advertised, and the successful, and perhaps even a member or two of the more intellectual of the "Four Hundred." The mere thought of such a riot is enough to make the well-seasoned New Yorker shudder and grow pale, but in girlhood's dreams it is a charming assemblage.

The Yale or Harvard undergraduate who cherishes artistic ambitions is also

a dreamer, and in fancy sees himself a distinguished "journalist," molding public thought, making and unmaking reputations, discussing the madness of Ophelia with eminent actresses who listen with wide-eyed interest, and uttering solemn warnings through trumpet-toned editorials to foreign ambassadors and kings.

It seems a shame to write anything calculated to break these cherished illusions of golden youth; and yet of all the perils that beset the path of the young and inexperienced, there is none to be more sedulously avoided than that which ostentatiously labels itself "Bohemia."

This is due partly to the decay of honored institutions and partly to the degradation of our language, two processes that have been going on steadily and rapidly since the period of the Civil War, when New York boasted of a Bohemia that, while second to Henri Murger's in point of reckless living and avoidance of responsibilities, was far above it in actual achievement; and which flourished at a time when prize-fighters fought with their bare knuckles in a forty-foot ring instead of with their jaws in the columns of the press; when sport was not a mere slave to the book-maker, and charity had not become a vulgar means of self-advertisement.

Words meant then a great deal more than they do now that yellow journalism and other deteriorating influences have brought into disrepute those noble superlatives and terms of high honor which were once employed only to characterize what was dignified and

worthy of respect. The word "hero" for example, which came down to us with stately tread from ancient Greece, stood for a brave man until the polluted lexicon of the Spanish-American War set it to the degrading labor of building up reputations for suttlers and fake war correspondents. In like manner the term "artist" has come to mean a toe dancer or a ragtime singer, while "professor" is more likely to stand for a chiropodist or dime museum lecturer than for a man of learning. As for the superlatives, which were once sedulously kept apart from the rest of the language, to be taken out and used only on special occasions, like the children's Sunday suits, their fate is not unlike that of the old thoroughbred racer condemned to end his days in the shafts of a peddler's wagon.

And no word, perhaps, has suffered both in name and spirit more ignominiously than has "Bohemia," which half a century ago meant such men as Walt Whitman, George Arnold, Fitz-James O'Brien, Edmund C. Stedman, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Jules Clemenceau and William Winter, and is now a thing from which the knowing ones of the town flee as from the plague.

Now the term "Bohemian" has been employed by no less a person than Anthony Froude to characterize those persons of artistic calling who "prefer adventure and speculation to settled industry, and do not work well in the harness of ordinary life."

It was this spirit that animated Edison in his adventurous excursions into applied science. Without this spirit Christopher Columbus would never have embarked on his famous voyage of adventure and speculation. Had it not been for this same adventurous spirit in the hearts of Washington and Franklin we should still be a dependent English colony. We should be profoundly grateful to all of those men, as well as to those revolutionists in art and letters who have weaned us from our Rogers groups, and our pictures by Frith, R. A., and made us dissatisfied with our J. G. Holland, Fanny Fern and E. P. Roe.

Now there are in New York at the present day many strata of society that call themselves "Bohemian," and it is no easy matter to determine which one of these should be most carefully avoided. To such low uses has the term been put that it now signifies with equal aptness the barroom loafers waiting for a drink, the unsophisticated flat dwellers who on the servants' night off enjoy a Bohemian evening in a fifty-cent *table d'hôte*, and the gathering of wealthy and fashionable idlers to see a skirt dance in a stockbroker's studio.

It will be observed that none of these comes within the meaning of the word as defined by Froude, except in the avoidance of industry of every kind. The spirit of adventure and speculation, as Columbus and Edison understood it, has no appeal for them, and they are entirely lacking in that care-free jollity and independence and that absolute indifference to fashion and conventionality which are the hallmarks of real Bohemia.

In Murger's Bohemia, the artist whose "Passage of the Red Sea" had been refused admission to the Salon so many times that it knew the way back to the studio of its creator, and the dramatist whose tragedy had been three times rejected by the same manager were merry wights, who laughed cheerily in the face of adversity and enjoyed life as they lived. The Pfaff Bohemia that was wont to gather in Pfaff's beer cellar, although in its later years it may have degenerated into a pose, still lives in the memory of its few survivors for its *noctes ambrosianæ* of song and laughter. It was there that Henry Clapp dictated to Artemus Ward the famous reply, "Brandy and water," to the telegram asking him what he would take for a hundred nights in California. It was there that many an Irishman like Fitz-James O'Brien found sanctuary in the companionship of men and women of wit and distinction equal to his own. It was there that Ada Clare sustained her harmless pose of "Queen of Bohemia" as gracefully as if it had been one of her stage parts. It was there that Howells, fresh from

the smug, black, broadclothed intellectuality of Cambridge and Concord, found a spirit strangely opposed to that of the philosopher who had called their idolized Poe the "Jingle Man."

There never was a true Bohemia that was not marked by cheery song, good talk and poverty. A bankrupt millionaire or a great noble of fallen fortunes frequently becomes the best of Bohemians; but let a member of the guild acquire wealth, fame or social position, and his Bohemianism slips from his shoulders like an old garment, as it did in the case of Clemenceau, who once contentedly quaffed his beer at Pfaff's and is now Prime Minister of France.

There is only one thing more absurd on its face than a wealthy and fashionable Bohemia, and that is one that is sour and discontented and whose laughter does not ring true. And the trouble with every one of our self-styled Bohemians is that it is not happy and careless, but morose, envious and given over to the worship of money chiefly in small sums, which it borrows on every possible occasion from the unsuspecting stranger under the pretense of "making a good Bohemian out of him."

No sooner does the cheery and unpretentious little foreign restaurant which has served to attract clever and interesting people begin to acquire a little local renown, than the professional Bohemian is certain to appear upon the scene. He is known to all wise men by his forced geniality and a laugh that never comes, as all honest laughs should, from below his collar button.

Now, of all unnecessary professionals who exist under the broad folds of our flag, the professional Bohemian is the most offensive—not excepting the professional Irishman, the professional Southerner or the professional beggar. Having no money in his purse, he is quite willing to place that flat receptacle at the service of anybody who has recently been paid off. Utterly devoid of talent, and even unable to appreciate it in others, he deceives the unsuspect-

ing by posing as the victim of a giant conspiracy of critics, editors and theatrical managers. Possessing not a particle of humor, he tries to earn a reputation by story telling—a dreary substitute for wit that ranks as one of the worst of our national vices.

It is doubtful if Edgar Poe and Gustave Doré, working harmoniously together, could portray all the horrors of those death's-head revels with which sour-faced professional Bohemians seek to replace the unaffected jollity and good cheer that gave the *table d'hôte* its reputation. In place of wit there is the subtle humor of the siphon; instead of song and laughter the calf-like dance of a "good-hearted, fun-loving Bohemian" draped in a soiled tablecloth.

An overripe pear does not decay more rapidly and completely than does good society in the face of an invasion of social Goths and Vandals; and it will not be long before the wise ones will have taken to flight, leaving the young and inexperienced behind to fall into the hands of the invaders. And their fate, so far as their artistic life and ambitions are concerned, is as deplorable as if they had become prisoners of the Apaches.

It is very easy to persuade a young man that he is a neglected genius, that the world owes him a living, that the noblest work of God is the good fellow, and that to prove himself such he must spend all his money on those who flatter him. In a short time this idiocy will harden into a pose that he will find it difficult to shake off. His vanity will grow until flattery becomes a daily necessity. Meantime his work will deteriorate in quantity and quality and he will find himself no longer able to pay for his daily flattery. And flattery never comes free. It must always be paid for in one coin or another.

"Ruined by Bohemianism" will be the verdict of his few remaining friends as he passes from the scene. But let us in justice remember that it was cold, mercenary, professional Bohemianism and "good following" that wrought his ruin.

LOVE SONGS

In Imitation of the Old English Poets

By WILLIS LEONARD CLANAHAN

BEN JONSON

AH, do not mock me with those eyes,
That haunt me daily, nightly,
Nor tease me in this roguish wise
With beams that dance so brightly!

Ah, do not tempt me with that mouth
That brims with budding kisses,
Lest my poor heart should choke of drouth,
Robbed of so many blisses!

Ah, let my foolish heart alone,
To heights supremest risen,
Lest, melted by thy slightest tone,
It sink within its prison!

THOMAS CAREW

Love me more or love me less.
All thy heart I fondly crave.
Hopes and fears, my witnesses,
Bid ye either sink or save.
Love-in-passion I adore:
Love me less or love me more.

Rave, if love shall bid ye rave;
Weep, if love will have it so.
I will sing in lightest stave
As thy moods shall come and go.
Hate or scorn or love express:
Love me more or love me less.

ROBERT HERRICK

Go, happy rose! My Phyllis find!
Her kisses with thy petals bind,
On her bosom, sweetly paired;
Tell her she my heart hath snared
By the beauty none hath shared.

And whisper, by her balmy breath,
So sweet it lulls thee into death,
I with roses will entwine,
Smother her with perfumes fine,
Till she grant me bliss divine.

THE SMART SET

Go, little rose! My message take;
 And if the maid be not awake,
 Kiss her on her bloomy cheek;
 Leave her in a pretty pique:
 I will haste and blisses seek.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

Come, live with me and be my love,
 Since passion doth the heart behoove,
 And we will all the pleasures sip
 That come of such companionship.

In fertile valleys we will rove,
 Where lowing kine together move,
 And suck the sweets from lily bells
 And pluck the glowing asphodels.

The richest hues shall be your dress,
 To match your perfect loveliness,
 Our priest the sun, our home the grove,
 If you will come and be my love.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

Could hearts remain forever young,
 If truth were in the lover's tongue,
 Then might thy plea my passion move,
 And I would come and be thy love.

Could buds in beauty ever blow,
 And skies no trace of anger show,
 I then might heed thy promise fine,
 And to thy hands my fate resign.

Were age a myth, did love endure
 As long as sorrow, and as sure,
 Then might I seek thy faith to prove,
 And come to thee and be thy love.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

My true love is my own, and I am his.
 Each liveth, hath a being for the other.
 One mind are we, and well content in this,
 Like happy children born of the same mother.
 My true love is my own, and I am his.

I have his heart, and wholly he hath mine.
 And evermore in this wise shall persevere.
 Each wrapt in each, we look with grateful eyne
 Upon the world, and so shall do forever.
 My true love is my own, and I am his.

THE woman who protests is half won.

AT THE SIGN OF THE GOLDEN BALLS

By BEATRIX DEMAREST LLOYD

I FOUND the little *mont-de-piété* without any of the trouble Bersac seemed to think I would have. As a matter of fact, since his day it had emerged from its dingy obscurity in a new coat of paint, and a younger generation had realized the importance of displaying the brilliant golden balls of the Medici over the door, which made my task of finding the place no harder than that of a cat to gauge the width of its belly by the span of its whiskers.

The younger generation looked upon me with bare tolerance when I stated my errand.

"Oh, yes, grandfather is still alive. He is there in the back. Yes, yes, we know the story. The good God knows he tells it often enough. He is quite mad, but harmless."

I suggested that he might be summoned, but the younger generation, after probing to the depths of my determination to hear the story from its original source, preceded me with no great willingness to a kind of sitting-room in the rear of the building. Here, in surroundings curiously mingled of very fine things and very cheap ones, undoubtedly the unredeemed spoils of the pawnbroker, sat an old man, almost hairless, with restless hands and eyes. He seemed to me not at all in need of the arousing shake administered to him by the younger generation, but appeared so thoroughly accustomed to being caught by the shoulders and rocked like a naughty child that the action hardly claimed his attention.

His curious eyes had more the look of the drug maniac than of a natural

lunatic, but he spoke occasionally in a wild way that might have been either. The younger generation, believing his mind to be thoroughly aroused by the shaking, called me to his notice, which was wholly unnecessary, and said I had come to hear about the Borgo rubies.

"Ah—you have heard of the Borgo rubies, have you?" cried the old man, his wrinkled skin trembling with earnestness. A secret hidden in an old yellow envelope he seemed to be. "They say I went crazy soon after—they say I am crazy now. But her lover could have told, had he not died like a silly fool in my shop yonder. He knew better than I how true it all was, God forgive him!" The old man made a scrambling motion to cross himself. "The evil one!" he whispered. "The evil one!"

The younger generation glanced disdainfully again at me as much as to say, "You really want to hear this nonsense?"

I motioned with my head that I was determined, yes. And so he brought me a chair and put it near me, and with a last look at the old man, as if the impulse to shake him as a terrier shakes a slipper were rising insurmountably within him, he turned on an abrupt heel and left us alone together.

The old man looked after him and then turned to me. "I didn't bear malice," was his extraordinary remark. "They can't expect people to understand."

He looked again at the door by which his grandson had disappeared and shook his head. And because his

mind seemed to have wandered from the story, and my time was somewhat limited, I brought his attention back to me with the question:

"Who was Count Borgo?"

The old man almost laughed. "Who is the devil?" he said craftily. "Count Borgo was not born here, did not, I think, really die here—and may not have been born or have died anywhere for aught I know. He was a terrible man. He had terrible eyes, almost white, with a black ring around the iris that widened and contracted like the pulse in a parrot's eye. He sometimes seemed to breathe with his eyes—the motion of those gill-like membranes was so regular. He had a nose like a Spanish grandee, with a bump like the Jungfrau above narrow, sly nostrils. His mouth always made me think of the things in the sea that open and shut and suck in other strange things. There was always a greedy, amused, tolerant, patient kind of a smile above his lips, but his mouth some days seemed small, some days large, sometimes cruel, sometimes hungry."

I waited during quite a lengthy pause, and then I nudged him mentally by saying, "Was he rich?"

"Is the devil rich?" inquired the old man, with his determination to liken the Count to the evil one. He turned in his half-palsied fashion the better to face me. "People said he was rich. But people say many things about him. There were even rumors that he was Balsamo Cagliostro himself, and could predict the future and reveal the secrets of the buried past. We seemed to be about the same age, but how can one tell? He came here to occupy the Villa Chesenecia overlooking the sea—of course it came to be called the Villa Borgo. It was burned down. Balsamo's houses always burn down. There were too many secrets in a house like that." He shook his trembling head and stared.

"And he owned these Borgo rubies?" said I.

"Tut, tut, you go ahead of the cart, ass that you are," chuckled the old man. "Where was I? Oh, yes! He

came here to live and brought his mistress with him. She was young and very gentle, and she had long, beautiful, yellow hair. I always believed at first she was his daughter, because her eyes were strange too—not white like his, but deep, inky, lightless black, like a piece of velvet; no shine, no sparkle, except in the whites of the eyes. You can imagine if she looked strange with such lampblack eyes and the yellowest of yellow hair."

"Indeed, yes," I said encouragingly. "And did they live happily at the Villa Borgo?"

"Happily!" echoed the old pawnbroker. "How can I tell you? There were strange things done in that place. I saw his laboratory once—an Englishman who had lost at the *petits chevaux* came in here to pawn a little gemmed bottle he had bought in Persia, and the very next day Count Borgo sent for me to bring it to him. Ah, you never saw such a room as that one—all full of the machinery of black art. I saw a heap of dead squirrels in a corner—their hearts were lying on a glass table."

"What did he want with the bottle?" I asked, to divert his thoughts from more disagreeable details.

"He pounced on me like a hawk on a chicken, and asked if there were not some blue and white crystals in the very bottom of the phial. And I looked and there they were. It excited him very much."

"And then?"

"Why, and then—nothing. I pocketed the price and went home. . . . Squirrel hearts on a glass table!"

He moved a little in his chair as if in disgust.

"But that certainly is not the story of the rubies," I said.

"You must be pressed for time!"

"I am," I affirmed.

"Well—I will go on. That is not the story of the rubies. Here is what I tell you—this mistress of his was never out of his sight. She had some power in those velvet eyes of hers, or some knowledge in her yellow head that was of use to him. He taught her at

every hour of the day. You could see them driving together in the afternoon; he would have some herbs in his hand, or he would be leaning close to her explaining some secret process for making gold out of pine wood. She always looked still and as if listening, but never happy. Old Fregonia said she had heard her talking quite comfortably with the birds, but Fregonia was never to be trusted, even with a married man. She was just as strange as he was, only she seemed gentle and he seemed cruel. But he loved her fiercely, one could see, in his savage way. It was said they made gold pieces of money in the top of the house, and did not make them out of holy gold either."

"But the rubies!" said I, looking at the clock.

"I am coming to that. When they had lived here several years, long enough to have the very strangest and most dreadful stories afloat about them, a wild, dissolute good-natured Russian fellow came here to amuse himself at the gambling tables. Nobody knew how they managed to meet and fall in love, but they did, and he married her actually."

"And Count Borgo—" said I, interested at last.

"He never said one word, or showed in any sign how deeply her desertion had cut him. I say he did not show it—he could not control his eyes, and I have seen those parrot-pupils of his widen and close and widen and close like a nervous woman's fan, when he looked at her. They all went on living here, which seemed a strange thing, but I think the young Russian rather liked to flaunt his capture in the Count's face, and I think the Count was too proud to go away as if he could not endure their flagrant presence . . . Don't you find it curious that my grandson should think me mad?"

The sudden, abrupt question rather startled me, for indeed I had been thinking that he told the wild story rather quietly, and wondering if perhaps the younger generation had not been too hasty when he pronounced

him insane. Naturally, I had not then heard the rest of the story.

The old man chuckled at my blank look. "I was a great deal more mad then, I can tell you," he said, his restless hands wandering over the wrap that covered his useless limbs. "For I believed myself to be enamored of this witch. Yes, yes, even I. Well, love is nothing but two parts belief to one part doubt, and mine was no squirrel heart to be laid on a glass table! The shine of her golden hair lured my eyes like a spell. And you may believe, sir, that when she forsook the Count Borgo and married this Russian adventurer, if it created some stir here in the town, you may believe how heavily it affected me. I used to follow them quite often when they drove about, her bright color rising to the snap of the autumn wind and her velvet eyes wholly shaded by the tumbled masses of her lemon-colored hair. At first they seemed to have plenty of money—but who should know first when the wolf stood at the door?" He paused a moment, and then leaning toward me for emphasis tapped himself on the chest greedily: "The little old pawnbroker in the little old Street of the Light Woman!" He continued to grin up at me and his withered index finger continued to poke at his tumbled cravat. I believed him to be now so far advanced in his story as to need no urging or reminder of what I had come to hear, and I decided that, time or no time, I would hear him out under his own conditions.

"The Russian was a gambler. And every night he went to the tables. Money goes fast enough that way, my good sir. But his went faster than anyone's—shall I tell you why? I found out by following him myself into the Casino and managing to get close to his chair. He had not been seated one minute before the man opposite him rose, leaving the seat vacant. And almost as if by arrangement the Count Borgo appeared to take his place. What a smile on his face, on that hungry mouth, my dear sir, and what a patient menace in those breath-

ing eyes! He sat smiling until the Russian placed his money—instantly he placed his own in direct opposition—rouge against noir—pair against impair—a high number against a low. And he always won, this Count Borgo. One would have said his fingers stopped the little ball where he would. Then how he and the Russian would look at one another, my dear sir! Their challenging looks met across the green cloth like a couple of swords. It began to be noticed, and men who wanted to win crowded about the Count to note what he would play. But it always happened that he put his pieces down like lightning just before the croupier cried, "*Rien ne va plus!*" and the would-be-successfuls were left with their stakes in their fingers. Once or twice a night the Russian would sit back stubbornly and refuse to place anything. But he could not remain at the table without playing, and, rather than seem to surrender, he would go on more recklessly than ever. Of course he won a little—it was impossible he should not win a little. But in the main he lost huge sums, my dear sir, huge sums."

There was no appearance of irrational mental process about the old man now. He had begun nervously enough—I fancied the stimulating shake administered by the younger generation might have been partly to blame for it. But now, although his eyes still sparkled with a flickering, uncertain light, he gave no other indication of an unbalanced mind. Although he made a pause here, I held to my policy and waited for him to proceed of his own accord.

"It was a deliberate plan of revenge, I thought," he said finally. "Of course no man incapable of unholy practices could have accomplished it, but the devil himself could not have controlled the roulette wheel to better advantage. My children think me mad because I believe he was the evil one himself, but if they had seen what I saw"—he made the old scrambling motion to cross himself. "But there was more to it than I thought," he said. "I

began to realize that Count Borgo hoped when he had thoroughly beggared his rival to win the woman back to him. I realized this when one day I saw those parrot eyes of his follow after her as she passed in her carriage, not with a look of anger or a threat of retribution, but with the most tender longing and passionate desire I have ever seen expressed. Who should be the first to know of a shortage of money in their household but the old *prêteur-sur-gages*?" he asked again, tapping his shirt-frill.

"They had not much to pawn, for the Russian was a nomad and had few possessions. And she had taken not so much as a jewel with her from Count Borgo's villa. They lived in lodgings in a house not far from here—my children say the house is gone now. Perhaps they believe it never existed. Perhaps they think the whole story a fiction of my madness. But I bear no malice! Nobody who had not known Count Borgo and the woman could believe it, I dare say. Well, the Russian brought what he could, a jeweled stud or two, a snuffbox with brilliants, an old emerald ring set in silver—it kept him going for a little while. Then when he had nothing more to pawn he asked me to sell the things outright, and so secured enough for another night. You may believe I followed him to the tables that evening. No one knew better than I that it was his last stake, and what with my own infatuation for the woman and my holy fear of Count Borgo, I was in an excitement unspeakable.

"Well, the Russian dropped into his chair and laid the handful of gold in front of him. Almost immediately the man opposite him rose with a laugh and a shrug as the croupier hauled in the last piece he cared to lose, and he had no more than got his legs from under the table when the Count took his place. The inevitable murmur went up from the crowd when the two glared their nightly challenge across the cloth. '*Faites vos jeux, messieurs,*' whined the attendant, and the battle began. Of course the Russian lost and lost and

lost. And finally his last piece was gone and he silently and grimly made his way out. I followed him down the street toward the little park, and then I saw a pistol in his hand and knew what madness was in his brain. I was just about to run at him when a figure darted past me and flung both arms about him, pinioning his arms. It was the woman. I could see her sun-colored hair in the same light that shone on the barrel of the revolver. He tried to shake her off at first, but she was talking earnestly and rapidly to him, and presently he ceased struggling to free his arms and seemed to listen curiously to what she was saying. After a little she slipped her hand along his arm and took the pistol from his fingers. Then she put her arm through his and turned him about, and they walked back together and passed me, he suffering her quite passively to lead him away, but regarding her as he went with a stare of incredulity that amounted almost to aversion."

It was spinning out into a much longer story than I had expected, but I had determined to hear it to the end, trains or no trains. Once the head of the younger generation appeared in the door, but after a sharp look of antagonism at his forebear and a glance of pity and contempt for me, withdrew again, to my great relief, and left us undisturbed.

"I went home—here—and wondered and waited. The next night I went to the tables, but he did not come, nor did the Count Borgo. I was half afraid they were going away, the Russian and the woman, and that I should never see her again. But I was mistaken. I would almost have given him money to go on playing with in order to keep her near me, for I was very rich in those days! Trade is very good in a gambling town, and money flowed into the little *mont-de-piété* in the Rue de la Femme Légère. However, it was not necessary. Fancy my amazement, knowing from his own confession that he had nothing further to pawn or to sell, when he came in at my dirty little door the next evening, and after looking around the

shop to make sure there was nobody there but ourselves, drew a flannel rag from his pocket and produced therefrom a long chain of gold, fully forty-eight inches in length, with links as big around as my fingers! What such an ornament could have been used for I could not have imagined, but when I blurted out the question in my surprise he said shortly that he believed that made no difference in the price I was willing to give for it, that he wanted to sell it outright, and would wait while I tested the quality. I carried the heavy thing into my little corner where my testing acids were, and I examined six links chosen at random. It was very good gold, and I weighed it and paid him in full. When he was gone with his pockets bulging, I laid the chain out on the counter and stared at it. It might have been used to chain a captive queen, but no other purpose could I think of that it might appropriately serve. I took an empty case from my stock, coiled the chain into it and put the box in the safe.

"Knowing how much money he had taken from me, I went to my bankers the next day and drew a large sum to refill my depleted box of available cash. On my way back through the town toward dusk, I passed her and her husband walking together. They had given up their carriage, and she had evidently sold her handsome gowns, for she was very simply dressed and wore over her small toque a heavy veil wrapped all about her head and throat. It hid her wonderful hair, but I saw her eyes and knew it was she, even though the lids were red with weeping.

"I had expected the money he secured by the sale of the chain to last much longer than it did. And so I did not follow him to the tables that night, but thought of waiting till the funds should be getting low. The bizarre golden chain had a fascination for me, and I took it out of the safe many times a day to look at it and to wonder what it had been used for and where he got it. I had had some suspicion that he had stolen it, but such a thing would have been noised about, and the police

come always first to me. I decided at last that he must have put himself in communication with relatives in Russia and that the ornament was less unusual there.

"But for all my calculations of how much he would lose in a night, I was wrong in my estimate, and he surprised me three days after the sale of the chain by walking into my shop again. What surprised me still more was that she came with him. I suppose her love for him and her terrible fear that he would kill himself had swamped all the pride there was in her. She was dressed as before in a cheap gown with a heavy veil around her head, and her eyes rather weary and sad-looking. But what I noticed most about her was how thin she had grown, poor creature, in the strain of all this, and how her bright color had faded.

"In his eyes I could see plainly enough the madness of the gambler who would stake his own child against the other man's luck. Beyond this, he had conceived such a hatred of Count Borgo and his devilish manipulation of destiny that he would have stopped at nothing to slake his thirst for retaliation. It was not for me to advise him, but with the wreck of her beauty before me I could not keep silent. Bluntly I told him that he was a fool, that he was simply satisfying the Count's hungry maw by flinging good money after bad. But he would not listen to me—brought up the old gambler's argument that luck must turn soon, and drew a flat leather case from his pocket. I saw the woman's hands clasp one another tightly as he pushed it across the counter to me, and I wondered if the contents of the box were dear to her. I glanced at them in turn as I drew the case toward me—they looked like two starving, emaciated, wild-eyed children begging for food.

"Then I opened the case. Well, sir, I swear to you that if he had handed me the Imperial Crown of Russia I could not have been more staggered. The case was an old one which had once held a piece of silverware, I imagine, and down in the center of the dusty satin

nest, in a hollow made as if to steady a bowl or plate, lay a handful of the most brilliant rubies I had ever seen in all my life. I was so stunned that I stood motionless and silent, just staring. Then her voice, strained and sharply pitched, caught me up. 'What is the matter?' she said. I choked and stammered that it was merely my surprise, and I carried the case nearer to the light. With my hands trembling I subjected them to tests. I could hear the breathing of those two people while I stood vainly endeavoring to scratch the surface of the stones with a diamond. They were the very finest of corundum crystals, worth more than their weight in diamonds. I finished my tests and stood staring at the two of them, unable to speak.

"'I want to sell,' said the man fiercely.

"'Sell!' I echoed. 'Take them to the Queen of England and Empress of India! Sell them—why, man, there isn't money enough in my bank to buy the half of them.'

"He glanced at her sharply and she at him. 'Pawn them, then,' she said in a whisper.

"'Very well,' said the man. 'Give me as much as you can for their security.'

"I opened my cash drawer and emptied it on the counter before him. 'There are twenty-five thousand francs,' said I. 'Take it—I have no more.'

"If you could have seen the rapacious clutch of his fingers on the money! He crammed it into his pockets, laughing with hysterical pleasure. 'Surely luck will be with me now,' he said over and over again, and he turned and went out, utterly forgetting her presence. She followed him wearily. It seemed to me she moved like a person who had had a long illness.

"Well, I went to the tables that night. The Russian came in, flushed and excited, and Count Borgo dropped into his place opposite as quietly as ever with the sinister, hungry look on his deep-sea mouth. At the first clap, the Russian put a thousand francs on the table. He seemed drunk with excite-

ment. I saw the Count Borgo's eyebrows go up in involuntary surprise at the amount of the sum. But instantly the expression passed, and he made his own play in his usual calmness of manner.

"The Russian lost again and again. It was noticeable that whereas at first the crowd had pressed close about the Count Borgo, they no longer did so, and there was always an empty space about him for several paces. I had even seen some men surreptitiously put out two fingers at him as he went by. Ah, I was not the only mad man in those days who thought he was the evil one! Had the Russian not lost so continually such huge sums, the bank could never have withstood the drain of the Count's winnings, but as matters stood the bank was glad to have them play every evening.

"The Russian did not abate his stakes, but put a thousand francs down at every turn of the wheel and lost them all. I worked my way through the crowd, and touched him on the shoulder, but he shook me off impatiently. When he had lost the last franc, he got up and went out moodily enough. I followed him, expecting to see him repeat the operation with the pistol, and thought it quite the best thing that he could possibly do, but to my surprise he went straight to his home with a step that bespoke a purpose of a less despondent nature. Could it be possible, I thought, that he had relatives in Russia who had sent him more than the chain and the rubies? It seemed impossible. With the most affectionate intentions in the world, the capacity for giving rubies worth more than their weight in diamonds is limited by natural laws.

"Nothing happened the next day, and I thought perhaps she was keeping him at home trying to dissuade him from parting with their last asset. If I guessed rightly, her attempt proved unsuccessful, for the next afternoon, after the sun had gone down, they came in together as they had done before. The augmented strain was telling on her to a terrifying degree. Her eyes were sunken in two dark pits, her lips

as white as her cheeks and her whole body drooping with despair.

"And what do you suppose they had with them, sir? Another box of rubies, as many and as fine as the last! I tested each one while they stood there waiting like starving children. Then, as I had no such sum in the place as I had given him before, I wrote an order on my bank for twenty-five thousand francs and gave that to him instead. He folded it into his wallet and was about to go, when she gave a little moan and fainted. He caught her on his arm and then let her down gently, and I gave her some brandy, and in a minute or so she revived, and they went away together.

"They had not been gone ten minutes when the Count Borgo strolled in. He leaned over the counterpane and the dreadful iris in his eyes widened and contracted like the mouth of a crab. 'What has that pauper got to pawn?' said he.

"The jewels were safe in their iron prison and the secret in my breast. So I shook my head at him bravely and said that it was not permitted that a *prêteur-sur-gages* should tell his client's affairs. He was angry enough, but he saw that I was in the right of it and he went away again. . . . Are you tired?"

I was surprised by the sudden question. He had seemed to forget my presence. "No," I said honestly enough.

"It is a long story," he said, "and I have told it to you in more detail than I usually do, to prove to you that I am quite sane. We have now come to the end of the story."

"The end!" said I, for it seemed very abrupt.

"Yes—the end. I did not go to the tables that night to watch their game. I knew that Count Borgo would win his mediocre sums with unholy regularity, and that for twenty-five turns of the wheel the Russian would lose every sou he had at a thousand francs a turn. I was interested, too, suddenly in my own future. In two days I had made a great fortune. Well enough did I know that the Russian would never have money enough to redeem the

jewels he had pledged with me, and that when the period was over when he might do so, I should become the legal possessor of rubies worth fifteen million francs. I decided to sit at home and brood happily on my new and wonderful fortune.

"And then about one hour before midnight—the tables close at ten o'clock—in burst the Count Borgo. And if he is not the devil, then the devil is his youngest son. He bounded at me like an animal, caught me by the throat, dragged me out before the safe and pointed a pistol at my head.

"Show me what he gave you as security!" he screamed at me, froth bubbling in the corners of his mouth. 'Bring it out, or by God I'll kill you without another word!' I was so stunned by the suddenness of his attack that I could only stare at him. But he brought me to my senses sharply enough by firing the revolver over my head as I half lay on the ground before him. I scrambled to my knees and began laying bare the intricately concealed lock of the safe with shaking hands. I managed to gasp out a terrified 'What has happened?'

"He has killed her!" The words were a curse on his lips.

"He has killed her!" I repeated horror-stricken, my hands pausing in their work.

"He has killed her! I have killed

her! Hurry, or I will shoot you on your knees.'

"Convinced that he was in some delirious fit by the very contradictions of his story, I hurried on with the tedious business of unlocking the safe, praying that his patience would hold out until I got it open. Then the door swung out, and I drew out the three cases and handed one to him with the unquestioning obedience with which I should hope to soothe a madman. He tore it open and gave a wild cry. Convinced suddenly that they had stolen the jewels from him, I felt my dreams of fortune fade. My own fingers mechanically opened the first case to let me look one last time on my treasures. There was nothing in the box but a long, heavy braid of golden hair!

"I suppose I would have knelt there until I died of old age had not the Count Borgo fallen like a bronze pedestal across the floor, in a swoon. The box he had opened rolled toward me. I saw that it was empty. I saw that the satin lining was stained red. I pulled the remaining case open—it was the same. Only the blood was still wet and warmish."

He said nothing further. I could be left to imagine that from then on people had called him mad. The younger generation put its head in at the door and beckoned me to come out.

ROUGE ET NOIR

By ROY TEMPLE HOUSE

"GO on," my warm blood urges; "'tis but sin."
 "'Tis death," my cowed confessor warns; "come back."
 Ah, soul of mine at hazard; who's to win

This breathless game between the Red and Black?

THE NOM DE PLUME

By MORGAN ROBERTSON

HE had been christened at birth John Marion Storm, and this name he signed to his letters and used on his visiting card until he received his first setback in life—a girl's "No"—just after graduation. After that he was Jack Storm, for the girl's answer sent him wandering around the world with those for whom two names were enough. He was in turn a sailor, a soldier and a miner; he herded sheep in Arizona and cattle in Montana, drying his clothes on his back when drenched by the storm; and bared to the waist, he had fed coal to the boilers of a Red Sea steamer in a heat that dried the perspiration on his skin. He learned and suffered every emotion and every physical pain; he learned various practical things not connected with his several trades; he could mend a clock, shoe a horse, pull a tooth and set a broken bone; he learned a smattering of many languages and the moods and temperaments of men of all kinds and nationalities. But he learned nothing of women, or the reason of the girl's "No," sticking to his first conception—that she was too good for him and knew it.

With this limitation—his utter ignorance of women—all this experience was good for him with regard to the vocation which he finally chose, fiction writing. This came to him in New York, after a siege with poverty that sent him sleeping in the parks.

In a soiled and frayed magazine which he found under a bench he read an editorial bid for short stories, and he began to think. He had a head full of stories, but no desk, no paper, no ink;

he had no place to sit down, except the benches in the parks. But he did have his nerve—that had never left him—and a pencil in his pocket. He secured work at delivering circulars to passers-by, and when he had delivered enough to satisfy his conscience, went to the park with the others, and on the blank backs he wrote a story of the West, a story of such power and virility as to force its way past the subordinates of the magazine he took it to and command the attention and acceptance of the editor. He was welcomed with praise of his story, requests for more, assurances of his success and a fat cheque which brought him lodgings, new clothes and a typewriter. He wrote more stories, of the West, the Klondike, the sea and the arid East where he had fired in the stoke holds. All sold readily. In a year he had enough written to make a look of short stories, and when this was published and the book notices began to come in, he realized that he had "arrived." For the reviewers called him the Kipling of the North, of the West, of the Sea and of the Klondike. He raised his prices, sent his photograph and history to editors who asked, refused to be interviewed, bought himself a South Bay catboat, a motor boat and a houseboat, and settled down to the life of a celebrity, content with the thought that the misery, suffering and schooling that came of the girl's "No," were part of an Infinite plan for his development, of which he was now reaping the reward. "For if I'd got that girl," he mused, "I'd have remained as I was: a conceited prig with a college education and nothing else."

But he misjudged himself. He had never been a conceited prig. On the contrary, as a boy, he was merely a big, broad-shouldered fellow, with a wide-open stare and a directness of speech that was disconcerting, especially to women. As a matured man, thirty-nine years old, he had whipped these attributes into submission, and gained to himself a courtesy of demeanor that made most women like him on sight, and a self-repression that made the slight opening of those eyes a surprise and a menace to men not thoroughly acquainted with him. By this simple trick of expression he had sold several stories to editors predetermined to decline them, but this curious power over his fellow-men he used unconsciously, attributing his success to the inherent worth of his stories, and dominated always by the sense of inferiority driven into his soul by the girl's "No."

She was a good girl, or such a man would never have loved her. She was not beautiful, judged by the ordinary standards, but in her clear-cut face was character, intellect, heart and soul. She had been trained to the conventions, she had read deeply of novels, and she knew the way of lovers and loved ones. So, when this blundering, big-eyed boy had picked her up in his arms, kissed her passionately and said, "I love you and I want you," she had struggled clear and furiously bade him begone. And he went, to begin his tutelage.

He seldom thought of her now. She had played her part; he was thankful for the "No," and his work was cut out—to picture to the world the life of his time, which he had lived so keenly, and which would be a record for posterity. He would write novels, now and then plays; for his name was good and there would be no difficulty in placing them. As for the love of woman, that was out of the question. What woman could suit him? Or what woman would want him.

In this frame of mind he finished his first novel, a tale of the sea and of strong men, without a woman in it from first to last, and received a substantial cheque from the magazine which had bought

the serial rights. While waiting for the cheque, the editor had jocularly chided him upon his inconsistency and versatility, calling to his attention a story in the current number of the *Ladies' Companion*, which dealt of matters far removed from the sea. He had signed to his stories the last two of his three names, Marion Storm; and this name was the trade-mark for the goods which he sold, strong stories of strong men fighting the battle of life against conditions of wind, weather, hunger and thirst, enmity, terror and hate. And to preserve to himself his viewpoint and his style of writing he had religiously avoided reading the stories of other authors. Hence he was unfamiliar with the names of men with whom he competed. That evening he bought the magazine mentioned by the editor, and found the name of Marion Storm signed to a story dealing with love, sentiment and the crudities of childhood.

His rage increased as he read. He could not have written such a story; he could not have read such a story had another name been signed to it. But with his own name at its head he read to the last. And its beauty of style and expression was lost upon him.

"Rot! Slush!" he exploded, as he flung the magazine from him. "Who is this sissy, anyhow? Some weak-chinned, effeminate French poodle, I suppose, signing my name to his work and getting the benefit of my effort! I'll see about it."

He wrote an indignant letter to the editor of the *Ladies' Companion*, and received an equally indignant reply. In part it was as follows:

You say that you have been five years making the name of Marion Storm popular, and that for fifteen years before that had been acquiring the material that you have put into your work. Let us inform you that, on referring to our books, we find that we have been taking the work of the real Marion Storm for ten years, and that for five years we have been wondering what obsession had taken him. Your letter has relieved our mind of this disquiet. The stories that we have seen under his name in the cheaper, coarser, more masculine magazines were written by an interloper,

and we are glad to know that Marion Storm, as a writer of rare ability, is still in the way of fulfilling the promise expressed in his early work. We have received all his work through a literary agent, or we might send you his address; but with regard to the futility of any further protest on your part, we do not feel bound to even extend to you the address of the agent.

Storm's thoughts and language had best be omitted. He went to a lawyer and found that he had no case in court. He went to the libraries and searched through the bound volumes of the last ten years' output in the magazine world; in nearly all he found the name of Marion Storm signed to sentimental stories of child life, of home life, of the pathos of old age and the futile tragedy of old maidenhood. Children, spinsters, mothers and grandmothers figured in these stories, and the soul of the strong man rose in revolt.

"What's the use of going on?" he exclaimed frantically. "What's the use? Any credit I may earn will be damned by the slush of this effeminate puppy. If I had known, I would have chosen another pen name. But have I got to begin over again with a new name?"

He thrashed it out as he sailed his catboat out into the combers beyond the Inlet, receiving in his face the cold salt spume picked up by the plunges, and steering his boat with both hands, his back pressed hard against the cockpit combing and his feet braced upon the cleats in the flooring. Three hours of this decided him. He would give up literary ambition, pick out a man's career, and work at it. Then he headed back before the wind, running the Inlet in a tumultuous cross sea that nearly flooded his boat, and dipped his boom for a third of its length. He had two reefs in his mainsail at the start, and he had left it so for the run in.

Like all men who have been buffeted by Fate from one occupation to another, he had occasionally questioned the meaning of it all. One such query was answered when he had been able to mend the clock of a farmer's wife, and thereby enable her to administer regularly the medicine which saved her

invalid husband's life. He had expended tremendous energy and patience to master the mechanism of a clock, but was well rewarded. Again, as an expert judge of ores, he had passed upon a spurious specimen and saved from bankruptcy a woman who had been kind to him. He had learned what he knew of ores in darkness, hunger and fatigue; but when he thought of the woman and her little hoard, he knew it was a price demanded from him because he could pay it. He had learned in the stern school of the fore-castle his knowledge of the sea and of boats—and his knowledge embraced the Seven Seas and every type and rig of craft from an Atlantic liner to a catboat—and this knowledge was now to be drawn upon, as he realized when he saw, dead ahead, in the short, choppy seas raised by the southerly gale in the sheltered bay, a canoe with a woman in it. She crouched amidships, her hair loosened and flying in the wind, drenched, helpless and pitiable, her paddle gone and the little craft low in the water, ready to fill with a few more breaking seas.

Storm paid off a point or two, funneled his hands and roared:

"Stand by. I'll round to, to windward, and drift down upon you."

The woman lifted her frightened face to him and raised her clasped hands in mute supplication. Then a short, crispy sea hit the canoe, heeled it and left it still lower in the water. He heard her scream against the wind.

"All right," he shouted cheerily. "I'll get you; don't worry."

He charged down, gauged his distance and rounded to with a slack sheet so as to shoot up in the trough directly to windward of the canoe. His judgment was good. The catboat lost headway, and with more showing to the wind than the canoe, drifted faster. Busy with his tiller and his flapping mainsail, he only glanced occasionally at the frightened face of the woman, and not until he had leaned over, grabbed her by the arm and pulled her bodily into his boat like a bag of potatoes, did he receive an inkling as to whom he had rescued. And even then not by look-

ing at her—for he was hauling in his sheet and jamming his tiller up—but from that wailing voice that came up to him from where she crouched in the cockpit:

"Jack, Jack—is it you? I thought you were dead."

One look was enough. He dropped the tiller and the boat again rounded to while he picked up the small, slim figure, looked into the eyes and kissed the pale little face again and again. A sea climbed aboard and flooded them both, but neither seemed to mind. She nestled in his arms like a contented child, smiling into his wondering eyes with a look of love and satisfied longing that he had never hoped to see. But the man was practical, in spite of it.

"Blown out from Fire Island?" he asked. She nodded and answered:

"Yes, and lost my paddle, and almost lost my faith in God—but not quite, Jack. I prayed at last, and then you came; and I'm glad now, oh, so glad!" She nestled closer to him, shivering with cold. But he was still practical, and a sailor. She was in the way of the tiller. He drew out an ensign from a locker, wrapped her in it and placed her from him; and then he rounded in the main sheet and brought the boat under command.

"We'll beat back to the dock, Beth, and land you," he said. "I'll pick up your canoe on the way over; it won't sink. And then, when we're rested up and dry and clean, with our good clothes on, I'll come over and call. I've lots to say to you."

"And I, too, Jack. Come over in time for dinner. Mother is there."

There was little opportunity for talk on that thrash to windward, but he found her small hand under the flimsy cloak of bunting and held it, and this was enough for the present—and for him. He made the dock at the end of the long pier in four short tacks, landed the girl and, after a promise to be over at dinner, watched her run up toward the huge hotel on the sands, graceful as a dancer even with her drenched garments impeding her. He saw her sink into the arms of an elderly woman who

met her on the veranda, then cast off and squared away.

"I think I see now what it all means," he mused. "My literary work is but the last class in my schooling. I had to make a man of myself first by hard work and suffering; and by study and thought and association with refined men and women to make myself a gentleman, so that I could get that girl. I'm satisfied now. The other fellow can have the *nom de plume*."

He picked up the swamped canoe, towed it to his house-boat and emptied it of water; then groomed his motor boat, and later himself. The wind died down that afternoon, and clad in white flannels he made the run across—towing the canoe—without shipping a drop. At the landing two women met him, one elderly and sweet of face, who called him John and thanked him brokenly for saving her daughter; the other a pink-cheeked, bright-eyed person in serge whom he did not know at all—until she spoke.

"Why, Beth," he said, "you've changed. You don't look anything like the drowned kitten I found this morning."

"And you," she answered gravely, "have changed too, and for the worse. I like you best with your hat off and your sleeves rolled up and drenched to the skin."

"Well," he laughed, "shall I shed the hat and coat and jump overboard?"

"Not at all. It would spoil that suit. Come with me. I want to talk to you. Mother, you must excuse us. I want him until dinner time, for I know there will be no chance afterward. They're going to lionize you, Jack. Everybody calls you a hero—and you are."

She led him past the groups on the veranda, and into a sun-parlor, where they were alone.

"Now tell me, Jack," she said, as she sank into a chair; "where did you go? I missed you for years."

"How many, Beth?" he asked with a smile.

"I won't say how many, for I don't want you computing my age; but it was

until lately that I missed you—until you came to me this morning. Where did you go?"

"To sea, Beth, so that I could learn how to handle a boat against this exigency. I was five years before the mast just to save your life. And you, Beth; what have you done?"

"Very little, Jack. I tried hard to make my life a success, but I think I have failed. At least, I became discouraged at last. You know I always wanted to write."

"Write? Why, Beth, that was my aim for the last five years. I worked like a horse, and thought I'd won out, but lately I found that some cheap, effeminate sort of a chap was using my name, and it knocked me out. Listen to this." He drew forth a clipping from his pocket—one he had saved as peculiarly offensive to him—and read:

Genevieve tripped lightly across the lawn, the light of love in her eyes, her whole soul aroused in expectancy of the meeting with her lover, her heart beating tumultuously—

"Oh, rot!" he exclaimed vehemently, as he tucked the clipping away. "I can't read it. It was written by the fellow that banked upon my reputation to sell his work. And the sneaky way he did it, too—never showed himself in a magazine office, but used an agent. Now I've got to quit, or build up another name."

Both were silent a few moments, while the girl's face grew thoughtful; then she looked up at him with a smile.

"Isn't it funny?" she said. "I never imagined you would try to write, Jack. I thought you might be a gambler, or a

highwayman, for I heard once that you had gone to the bad. But I've had the same trouble. Wait—perhaps I can find something."

She searched the magazines on the tables, and opened one. "Listen to this," she said, as she turned the pages:

And the cook came out of the galley with his knife, bloody murder in his eyes and the flush of racial hatred in his black, evil face, only to meet the hard fist of the boatswain and go down.

"That," said the girl, "was written by a mean man who adopted my name."

"Beth," said Storm, in the voice he would have used if aloft in a gale, "are you Marion Storm, the writer?"

"I am," she answered proudly.

"So am I. Where did you get that name, Beth?"

"It was mother's maiden name, Jack, and I had a right to it. And then"—she turned her face away—"it was yours, too, and I thought—I thought, Jack, that it might attract your attention, wherever you were. I did not know where you were."

"And did you write that—that extract I just read," questioned the man ruthlessly.

"Perhaps I did. I've written so much. It sounded familiar. Did you write about the cook and the boatswain?"

"I did."

He looked down at her averted face, wet with tears now, and slipping his arm around her lifted her to her feet.

"Beth," he said gently, "forgive me. I was too rough and selfish. But the name of Marion Storm need not die out. You can edit me."

THE man who is satisfied with himself has a low estimate of other people.

GOD made man, and then He made woman lest man should be too happy.

SCRAPS ON THE HEARTH

By NALBRO UPDYCK BARTLEY

O F course, it is all changed now—but you don't seem to realize it—you might have saved me this—might you not, dear? You might have told me, as you did, brutally and without warning—and then have stopped writing—stopped writing, and let the pain die out by itself. So many people warned me about this, and I never could sustain argumentation—you know that. I always fell down when you looked at me and worshipped you blindly, and had I known, oh, had I known that it meant a blight to you—I would have drawn myself away from your life, long, long ago when we were first engaged and life seemed one rosy path of happiness . . .

. . . no, it doesn't seem possible and yet I know it is. You and I are strangers—you and I, and we shall never, never be anything more to each other; never be able to reach out and say "Comrade,"—not even that! I think, dear, if you will excuse my saying it, I think you bullied me a good bit—you must admit it—you bullied me from the time we coasted down hill to now, when, a broken-hearted woman, I am writing to you because—because I am—just as the maniac chases elusive phantoms. Your career is yours—you will have unchecked, unblocked progress—there isn't an atom to stand in the way of your work—and I wish you happiness. Only, sometimes, I am afraid you will stop and think of the days that were and wonder whether, after all, success built on a broken heart is the kind that counts . . .

Your last letter hurt me more than

all the others—more even than the one in which you said, "My life work lies beyond your comprehension; you and I must say good-bye," for in this last selfish scrawl—forgive me, boy, but I'm past twenty-five—you say, "The sickly sentimentality of a spoiled woman makes a man hate the name of love"—a bit rough, old comrade—a bit undeserved. If I have been sickly sentimental, dear, it has been unconscious—it has been because it has seemed to me that in all the dreary waste of years to come, your face and voice would haunt me relentlessly and that if I should "buck up and marry well," as you advised, I should never miss an hour in the day but what your dear self should be near me . . . You see, I have been rather ill—very ill, in fact—for a long time—and it is a bit hard to get into the run of things . . .

. . . your last letter sounded more like yourself—or was it only pity? You spoke of the day you sailed abroad—the glorious, golden day when I, in my coat of red and unruly hair, almost clambered up the ship's side to say "God-speed." Perhaps that moment was the happiest in my life . . . I do not remember a happier one—no, not even when you told me you loved me and covered my face with kisses—back in the old home in the mountains. You see, it meant the beginning of a new life—even the cruelty of separation—the longing for companionship—the waiting (always the woman's part) could not dull the anticipation of the return home . . . and the letters grew so short and distant—and the years passed—one—two—three—four—and then

came the letter that cut the last tie and made you free. Me, a slaveholder!—a drawback! Ah, boy, that letter—

. . . I did not answer your note from Vienna because I have not been at all well and the home duties have crowded in upon me with a new meaning in life. One's horizon cannot be bounded by the scars of an old romance. It is to the new and ever present that one's salvation is found . . . Your work is going well—you know how glad I am—you know there isn't a day . . . But of course that is all past. You ask me what I have been doing . . . Yes, I spent part of last winter in New York, studying bits here and there—for space fillers for the days that were so empty . . . Lives are queer things, are they not, boy? You at thirty and I at twenty-five are so, what is it—jumbled? You at the gate of your success and I—ambling along the road to mediocrity . . . Yes, we have been having much company—mostly older men, but I go out but little. Home is much the same—the same people who tired you—the same dear, simple ways and happenings. And say, boy, do you remember the time that you and I raced down the hill that glad October day and sat in the burrow of leaves at the bottom and planned out the bungalow that we would some day build at the foot of the hill? Perhaps it bores you to remember—some people it bores—others it pains . . .

Of course I am glad to have your letters. You must be changing to stop and ask—always so self-confident before . . . But my answers will be more irregular, for I am spending much time in New York and the social duties crowd in more heavily since the Major comes more often . . . Today reminds me of the one when you came to the gate—you had been riding and the curls on your forehead were moist and your face tanned by the summer winds, and you leaned over the gate as I came out to meet you and said . . .

. . . you seem much interested in the

Major. He is sixty, hot-tempered and kind-hearted, with a heap of money, boy, that buys his welcome anywhere. Perhaps I am growing old—twenty-six next November. I feel exhausted and there are certain emotions that never come back to one . . . Have you experienced that sensation of wanting to care—and finding it an utter impossibility?

. . . So you don't like the Major, boy! You don't care for his type! Come close, let me whisper—no more do I—and we always did like the same folks. . . . Today there is a howling wind and I have climbed to my favorite place in the attic for a scribble and a read and a dive into the past and a bit of a cry if the spirit moveth me—and the Major is coming to dinner—and you, boy, are five thousand miles away, playing your way into hearts—and so far, so very far away. . . . The attic is just the same, boy, as when we snuggled in the twilight and planned on your going abroad and . . . just the same—a bit more threadbare, perhaps, like the house and the occupants—but just the same . . .

. . . I came across your letters the other day—the ones written when you were at music school in New York. How could you be so selfish?—so self-assured. How you trampled over the heads of people just for the practice of the thing . . . I think I am beginning to see you in a different light. The Major is so considerate—always at the house . . . No, I can't agree with you as regards the first love—it seems to me such things are better not discussed. You hint at my once frantic letters—perhaps they were, boy, perhaps they were—the whole time seems very far away and I cannot bring myself to look back with any degree of safety. You ask me what people say about our broken engagement. You ask, for the first time in two years, if it was at all hard for me to stay here among them . . . Boy, you have a deal to learn yet. Some say you have thrown me away like an ill-favored toy; others that

I am well rid of one whose viewpoint is only himself, and whose acts were so cowardly. A few treat me with a sense of gentle pity as one whose life is wrecked and name is shamed; and there are more who hold your name with but little love, for you see, boy, they knew me when I was engaged to you—when I bounded through the street when your letters came—when I ran, shouted, laughed, danced and thanked God at every caress you wrote; and then, they remembered the other time—when I limped through the streets, gray and old and bent, and kept on saying over and over like a child learning a lesson, "He doesn't want me—he doesn't want me—he is not coming for me—ever—ever—I can't grow into his work—it is too big for me . . ."

. . . and so, boy, we say good-bye—and this time I write you and tell you to write no more, for I am going to marry the Major, and perhaps I shall still be able to help you—but not in the way we planned. As his wife I can "push you" when you make your first tour. . . . The Major is sixty—I respect him—there is only one big affair in our lives, and after that—little matters. . . . Good-bye, boy; please don't keep writing me—I sha'n't answer—I shall hear all of importance about you through the musical paper. Perhaps the cruelty of making one so suffer has helped your technique and the wringing of the heart's blood of someone you once fancied has made the modulations in the bit of Chopin appeal to the crabbed critic . . . I don't know—I don't pretend to know—I only know that this is a happier ending than most women have when the first essence of trust and happiness is taken from them . . . and so good-bye—may you . . .

. . . I asked you not to write. If I remember correctly, you said to me—oh, so long ago!—"Our correspondence had better be discontinued. I am wedded to my art—and you have no place in it." I wrote, oh, boy, blindly, foolishly, and kept on, the letters covered with scalding tears and—and yet, you write

me an impertinent, masterful letter telling me I am selling myself and but poorly at that—the kind of a letter that would have once made my heart beat hard—and I ask you once more—not to write. . . .

. . . your six letters have reached me. I married the Major over a month ago and am—very happy. He is kindness itself. You ask me to look back into the past—all that we have been to one another. May I ask you what abominable selfishness prompts you to keep on writing and prying since you have told me that your love is dead? Don't you admire fair play, boy? Aren't you man enough to quit cold? You say you cannot understand my silence . . . I smiled as I read that and pictured you writing it—the frown on your forehead, the rumpled curls, the down-curved mouth—always to have what you most desire, even if it cuts the other chap, eh, boy? I am—the Major's—wife. . . . Please read that slowly and let it sink in and sizzle and come out white hot as it did when I read, "I am wedded to my art and you have no place in it" . . . and I ask you—please do not write. The timid, yet fearless, shy and awkward little girl who with eyes so filled with tears that she could scarcely stumble about, watched you sailing proudly out to see and learn the beauties of the Old World, and who waited breathlessly for every word from you, every line, waited for your return to take her back and show the same beauties to her—she has gone away—I don't know where. She went away a long time ago and in her place is a woman, a bit cynical and sad perhaps, but a woman who can only smile gently as you stammer and try to paint the touching pictures of the old times, and wonder how you really feel. I am the Major's wife, and I wish you would not write again. . . .

SIX MONTHS LATER

. . . boy, you take the bit hard—and you balk often and the whip will be well worn before you will be broken. And yet I dread it for you. . . . So you

are experiencing a bit of the same old feeling of despair—and you think love can be revived at your beck and call. You are mistaken again, boy. One can stop loving, one can never care again—the old feeling is as dead as if it never existed. It is the result of the strain that tells—that is all. Good-bye, boy; I mean it this time. . . .

A MONTH LATER

. . . for the last time—and tear up and burn up these letters—and plunge back into five-finger exercises and lec-

tures on Grieg—and good-bye . . . But I must tell you one thing: last night the old house burned down—the Major and I have been living at the new hotel since our marriage and the old place has been deserted. Not even the trysting nook in the hallway or the dream-bench in the attic are left . . . odd how certain periods of our life pass so completely away that no trace remains. We go out a great deal . . . The last trace will be obliterated (except for the tiny lock of white over my left temple) when these letters are burned. . . .

BACHELOR DAYS

By ADELE M. WHITGREAVE

AH, our bachelor days,
And our bachelor ways,
What a charm they possessed for us then!
When we thought every girl
Was a peach or a pearl,
And we trusted the friendships of men.

When we lighted our pipe,
And we dreamed half the night,
And we longed—with the longing of men—
For the ships sent to sea
That for you and for me,
Have never been sighted since then.

From the smoke of my pipe
Comes a face in the night,
And it brings back the parting of ways;
And my heart is aflame,
For I love her the same
As I did in my bachelor days.

A YOUNG man makes love to the woman; an old man makes love to the sex.

February, 1909—9

THE ERRORLESS MAN

By WILLIAM JOHN BARR MOSES

THE parents of John Gavin were advanced thinkers, scientists to the marrow, people who at meal time talked about the nebular hypothesis instead of about their neighbors, wrangled about automatism instead of free will, and discussed pragmatism instead of the latest fashions. Naturally, at a tender age, John had imbibed unusual notions about himself and the universe. One of these notions—it was a favorite topic with his father—was that he was a machine running according to fixed laws with which he could in no wise interfere. All other human beings were machines also, according to this doctrine, and human perfectibility consisted in being as perfect a machine as possible; in other words, of reacting perfectly at every point in which it was brought in contact with its environment. Instead of saying to himself, "Should I do this or that?" a man should inquire what reaction the present aspects of his environment require of a perfect machine, and respond accordingly.

As other boys resolve to be clergymen, baseball players or pirates when they grow up, so John in his infancy resolved to become a perfect machine, an errorless man; and more tenacious of his childish ambitions than many, he so far succeeded that at the age of twenty-five he was fully persuaded that he had learned to react perfectly to all the forces of his environment. If, for instance, when passing a shop window, his eye chanced to catch the glint of a handsome necktie, and this glimpse of shimmering cloth roused a desire for possession in his consciousness, he walked deliberately into the store and

bought the tie, without debating the question of whether he needed or could afford it. Again, if he happened on a moonlit summer evening to be sitting in a secluded corner in close proximity to an attractive young lady, and felt an impulse to put his arm around her and kiss her, he did so at once, without stopping to ask himself whether she would scream or not or what the consequences would be if she did. And up to the time of this story, it may be remarked, she never had.

Fortunately the Gavins were wealthy, and no less fortunately they lived in a country village of moderate size, so that John's perfect reaction against his environment in the shape of handsome neckties and similar articles of apparel was not as expensive as it might otherwise have been, and did not greatly interfere with that other portion of his environment represented by his yearly income. His customary reactions in the cases of good clothes and pretty girls had given him the reputation of being the most desirable marriageable young man in town, and many young ladies were spending much anxious thought and labor in an effort to frame up an environment for John Garvin, the perfect reaction against which would be a proposal of marriage, but none of them had as yet succeeded in this undertaking.

It chanced that in the neighborhood of the village in which John Gavin resided there was a lake, much used for boating, fishing and bathing, and that in a shallow bay, at the most distant end of this lake, white water lilies grew in profusion. One July morning John felt in his environment

certain impulses which prompted him to row up the lake and get a sheaf of these lilies as a present for a certain young lady in whose company he had spent the previous evening.

He rowed slowly up the lake accordingly, enjoying the freshness of the morning air, the undulations of the dancing blue waves, the sparkle of the sunlight on the waters, and the play of light and shadow over the green trees and grass of the shore. White clouds floated softly overhead, swallows skimmed about like black specks against the clouds, a flock of terns flew restlessly back and forth near the surface of the lake, and all of these things were reflected brokenly from the rippling blue of the water. John reacted against this environment by feeling calmly and tranquilly happy. The joy of life throbbed through his veins and that was reaction enough for that July morning.

Suddenly rounding the point into the lily bay and looking over his shoulder in order that he might determine his course more accurately, his pulses quickened, and a new element in the environment seemed to demand more strenuous reaction. A stockingless nymph, with filmy skirts wrapped tightly about her knees, was making a futile attempt to reach a large and unusually perfect water lily, which grew nearer the shore than any of the rest. She was so near the point that John's boat had shot up abreast of her and John himself, resting upon his oars, was staring at her, before she saw him.

"Good morning," said John, reacting perfectly, as usual, and at the same time checking the motion of his boat that he might not shoot past.

The nymph, on her part, reacted first by standing still and staring in mute astonishment, and then by retreating hastily to the shore where her shoes and stockings lay upon the sand. Here she stopped defiantly, her cheeks red and her eyes bright. John surveyed the pretty vision, from the mass of golden hair which crowned it to the tiny pink toes which supported it, and reacted with a thrill such as he had

never felt in all his life before. She had blue eyes, red lips, flushed cheeks, a fair forehead and a lithe slenderness of form which proclaimed youth; and she was clad in filmy, sprigged muslin, the diaphanous texture of which aided and abetted her girlish loveliness. The skirt of her dress was somewhat short, short enough to reveal the slim feet perfectly and to suggest that the girl herself was not yet eighteen.

John's eyes dropped from the nymph to the water lily, and stretching forth his hand (for he was now just beside it), he pulled the white beauty from its blue resting place and flung it ashore so that it alighted on the brown sand just beside the ten little pink toes.

"There you are," he said heartily.

"Th—thank you," said the nymph rather undecidedly, stooping to pick up the offering.

The tones, slightly tremulous, of the fair girl child, roused in his breast a conviction. This conviction was that the only proper reaction against such environment as this was serious love making, a proposal and marriage. That he did not know the young lady in the least, and that he was wholly unacquainted with her name, her family and her antecedents, did not give him pause for an instant. Was he not an errorless man, a perfect machine, responding properly to his environment?

"If you like," he called fearlessly, "I'll take you out in my boat and you can get as many water lilies as you wish."

She glanced down at her shoes and stockings and at her bare feet, and then at the hundreds of white golden-hearted lilies afloat just beyond John Gavin, then at John himself. Doubtless his straightforward daring on this, as on other occasions, counted in his favor.

"All right; I'll go," she said, but she spoke in such a low tone that she almost muttered it, and while she was speaking she looked at the sand and not at John.

Reacting against the words, John ran his boat skilfully ashore and sprang out. The girl hesitated, as if she were about

to suggest the propriety of dressing her feet before she entered the boat, but John, seizing one arm, had helped her in before she could protest. He directed her to take the seat in the stern, shoved the boat free, sprang in, and backing water vigorously a couple of times had her, in ten seconds, within reach of a half dozen magnificent water lilies.

She reached for the nearest, tried to pull it, and broke it off with only about three inches of stem. With the second and the third she fared no better.

"Oh, dear," she exclaimed, "I keep breaking them off. I wish I could get them with long stems."

"Roll up your sleeves," suggested John, "and reach down the stem as far as you can; then give a slow, steady pull and you will get the whole of it."

So the filmy, sprigged muslin was rolled up, revealing her slender, white arm, and she leaned over, reached down into the water and began to pull the lilies as she had wished. John watched her in silence, from time to time changing the position of the boat as it became necessary.

At last there lay all about her feet a great heap of the sweet-scented, white, golden-hearted flowers. She reached for another, larger, more magnificent than any she had gathered, and pulled long and steadily, but it did not come.

"Oh, dear!" she said and looked at John appealingly. "I can't get it."

"I'll help you," he responded, stepping lightly to the end of the boat; taking care to avoid crushing the lilies at her feet, he knelt at her side.

She still clung to the lily stem, and as he reached down to grasp it also it naturally brought his face very close to hers.

"Now pull," he said, and at the same moment, reacting perfectly as usual against his environment, he bent forward and planted a gallant kiss full on her inviting red lips.

The next thing he knew she had seized him by the collar and pitched him headlong overboard among the lily pads.

When he came to the surface, he saw that she had taken the oars and driven

the boat about a rod distant, where she had stopped in hesitation.

"Can you swim?" she called to him, poising the oars so that she might either escape or go to his assistance as circumstances should dictate.

For answer John struck out vigorously in pursuit, and the girl, satisfied that he was in no danger, rowed away as fast as she could, showing quite plainly that she was accustomed to that form of exercise.

If the water had been free of obstructions, John could not have caught her, but as it was, the lilies impeded him more than they did the boat. The moment he realized this, he turned and swam for shore, while the girl continued her course across the narrow mouth of the bay. Once out of the water, John stood dripping on the sand and watched her. He saw her beach the boat, spring out and enter the woods. From the place she had chosen to land, he decided that she was staying in the Judge Smith cottage, and feeling that her repulse of his attentions only added zest to his purpose, he decided that he would call at the cottage that afternoon with some excuse or other or without any, reacting, as usual, without doubt or hesitation. Then his eyes fell on the shoes and stockings on the sand beside him. He picked them up and carrying them in one hand started off to walk around the end of the bay to the place where his boat was.

At noon he made inquiries of the local agent who had charge of the renting of the Smith cottage, and found that it had been sold to a man named Haven, concerning whose family the agent knew nothing. But John had no doubts in his own mind. The girl was either a daughter or a niece of Mr. Haven, more probably a daughter.

At two o'clock in the afternoon he got out his runabout, and with the shoes and stockings shamelessly unwrapped in the seat beside him, started out for the cottage. The spin was a short one. John arrived before the door of the wide-screened porch in just twenty minutes after he left home.

His heart beat high in triumph.

There was the girl all right, reclining in a hammock at one corner of the porch reading a book. She glanced up when the whir of his runabout attracted her attention, saw who it was, blushed a little and pretended to be absorbed in her reading. There was another person on the porch—a large, broad-shouldered man, with a trim black beard, who sat in a chair near the door reading a magazine. He, too, glanced up as the sound of the car struck his ears, but noting John's evident intention of stopping, he continued to watch him, holding the magazine open in his lap.

As John stepped out of the runabout and walked toward the door, the large man rose slowly and went to meet him.

"Mr. Haven?" inquired the young man through the screen, swinging the shoes and stockings in one hand as he stood on the step.

"Yes," said the large man, smiling rather broadly, and at the same time opening the door.

"I came to see your daughter," said John boldly.

"Her?" asked the large man, still smiling and pointing with his thumb to the girl in the hammock.

"Yes," said John; "I brought back her shoes and stockings."

"Here're those shoes and stockings, Violet," called Mr. Haven to the girl. "The young man has brought them back. I told you he would."

The girl said nothing. She was hiding her face behind her book and shaking violently.

There seemed to be a deadlock.

"I—I came to *call* on her too," said John; "that is, if you have no objections."

"None at all," said the large man heartily; "call as long as you like and as often, but perhaps I ought to tell you first that she isn't my daughter."

"Your niece?" suggested John.

"No," said the large man; "wife."

Mrs. Haven at this point burst into shrieks of laughter, in which her husband joined.

John put the shoes and stockings down on the chair nearest him.

"In that case, I won't stay," he remarked drily, and turning his back on their unseemly mirth, pushed open the door, walked out to his runabout, cranked up, sprang in, and sped back to town as fast as gasoline would take him.

BACK TO EARTH

AUTOMOBILIST—What advantage has the airship over the motor car?

AERONAUT—Well, for one thing, you can always be sure of making good time on the return trip.

A VETERAN

"THEY say her married life was one long series of battles."

"Yes, she always refers to her alimony as her pension."

THOU SHALT NOT STEAL

By EDITH SESSIONS TUPPER

RICHARD LEIGH (*Treasurer of the Weston Worsted Milling Company*).

JOCK TYRRELL (*a wayfarer*).

A TELEGRAPH MESSENGER.

AMY LEIGH (*Richard's wife*).

PLACE: *Weston, Pennsylvania.* TIME: *Today.*

SCENE—*Living room of LEIGH's house on the outskirts of Weston, Pennsylvania. Room, plain, neat and comfortable, without any pretentiousness. Center, a window opening on porch. At the left, a door to porch. At right, door facing audience, leading to stairs and, as in many old-fashioned houses, stairs boxed, forming angle in wall. Door to stairway has lower part of paneled wood, upper half of glass. At left, a cupboard let into the wall and a door to bedroom. At right, another door to kitchen. At window, heavy curtain, drawn back disclosing snowy landscape. An old-fashioned fireplace in which log of wood is burning. Clock on mantel shows time—11.15. A large, round table on which is a student lamp, books, a Bible, papers, etc.*

(*At rise of curtain AMY is discovered looking out the window. She is slender, pretty, fair-haired, dressed in a dark cloth gown, simply made, with white collar and cuffs.*)

AMY

There he is!

(*Runs to door—unlocks it. Enter*

RICHARD. *He is a good-looking, well-dressed, typical young business man. Carries satchel which he puts on table. Greets his wife affectionately.*)

RICHARD

Hello, girl! Think I was never coming?

AMY

Oh, Dick, I was just going to cry. I thought something had happened.

RICHARD (*removing topcoat*)

Oh, no—what could happen? I was detained at the mills—that's all. I had to go over a lot of accounts. (*Goes to fire, throws himself down in*

armchair.) I've worked like a dog today.

AMY (*laughingly*)

Does a dog work?

RICHARD

Well, I don't know that he does. I think he has a deuced easy time. I might better say I've worked like a dray horse.

AMY

Poor old boy—too bad! I wish we were rich.

RICHARD

Gad, I wish so too. I tell you, Amy, I get mighty tired of grubbing along like this, year in and year out. I do more work at that confounded mill than anyone connected with the place,

and I get the meanest salary proportionately, and the worst of it is, I see nothing ahead. Just the same everlasting, monotonous grind. I'm dead tired of it—dead—tired. (*Looks moodily in fire.*)

AMY

I know, dear, it's hard, but think how happy we are. The only drawback is that I am so much alone.

RICHARD

Yes, it's a confounded shame! Too bad you can't keep a servant out here.

AMY

They all complain of the loneliness of the place. I think in the spring, Dick, we must move into town. There are times when it seems as if I should go crazy from lonesomeness. And then I don't mind confessing that I am actually afraid.

RICHARD

Afraid—nonsense! Of what?

AMY

Oh, tramps—peddlers—burglars—

RICHARD

Why, you have a revolver—

AMY (*half laughing*)

Yes, but I don't know whether I would dare shoot if a thief should come.

RICHARD

A thief would get a lot here, wouldn't he? (*Rises—goes to table.*) He might tonight, though—and a good haul, too. (*Puts hand on satchel.*) Amy, what do you think I've got in here?

AMY (*excited and pleased*)

Oh, I can't imagine. A present for me?

RICHARD

Poor little girl! I'd like to be able to make you handsome presents.

AMY

What is it, Dick?

RICHARD

Well, my girl, that satchel holds just eleven thousand cold, hard bones.

AMY

Bones?

RICHARD

Dollars!

AMY

Eleven thousand—Dick, what do you mean?

RICHARD

Just what I say. (*Opens satchel, takes out package of bills.*) Look at the yellowbacks—aren't they beauties?

AMY (*runs to window—hastily draws curtain across, then comes back and looks intently at RICHARD.*)

Richard Leigh, where on earth did you get all that money?

RICHARD (*still caressing bills*)

It came by Adams Express. It's the money to pay the weekly wages of the hands. The road was blocked by the heavy snow, which made the train so late that the bank was closed, so I had to fetch it home with me. Just think, Amy, what that money would mean to us! We could go away from this beastly hole—away to another country—travel—see the world—rest—enjoy ourselves—

AMY (*reproachfully*)

Dick! Don't talk like that. Why, that money is to buy bread and clothing and fires for hundreds of hard working, deserving people.

RICHARD (*still handling the money—tensely—feverishly*)

Yes, yes, of course—of course, I know, but I am thinking of the good times it would mean for you and me. Then you could have presents, Amy, and finery—and—

AMY

Oh, dear boy, it grieves me to hear you speak like that. What, would you weigh this money against our happiness?

RICHARD (*dully, as if thinking deeply*)

But we should be happy if we had all this money.

AMY

Yes, if we had earned it. Oh, I sha'n't sleep a wink tonight.

RICHARD

Absurd! Why, no one knows about it but the express company and myself. Amy, you are a baby. (*Closes satchel. Takes it and goes toward cupboard.*)

Let me see, I'll put it in this cupboard along with your Sunday bonnets. It'll be as safe there as anywhere.

AMY

Oh, no; take it in the bedroom and put it under the bed.

RICHARD (*laughing*)

The very first place a burglar would look. (*Opens cupboard, sets satchel in.*) This is much better. (*Closes door and comes down. Speaks absent-mindedly.*) Much easier for me to get at.

AMY (*in wonder*)

Much easier for you—to get—at?

RICHARD (*recalled to himself*)

Yes, yes—in the morning, I mean. Why, Amy, what ails you? (*Puts his arm about her waist.*) You little goose—you are trembling like a leaf. Don't be so silly.

AMY

Oh, I am so frightened to have all that money in the house!

RICHARD

Nonsense! Nonsense! Now cheer up. Nothing will happen. Isn't Richardkins here to defend it? I say, Amy, I'm hungry. Haven't you got anything to eat?

AMY (*relieved*)

Oh, yes—I have cold meat and bread and cheese and—and—

RICHARD

Kisses. (*Kisses her.*) Well, we sha'n't starve on that bill of fare. Fetch on your banquet, Mrs. Leigh.

AMY

All right, Dick. I'll have a lunch here in a minute.

(*She hurries off at right. RICHARD looks after her, goes quickly to table, opens drawer, takes out revolver and looks at it. He hastily removes the cartridges, puts them in another drawer and puts revolver back where he found it. Listens. Goes to window, draws curtain and peers out.*)

RICHARD

He ought to be here by now. Is that someone coming? Yes, by George! (*Drops curtain. Comes down center and stands listening. Sounds of footsteps on porch outside. Enter AMY hurriedly with tray containing food and milk.*)

AMY

Dick! I thought I heard something. (*There is a loud knock on door.*)

AMY

Oh, Dick! Dick! (*Puts tray on table. RICHARD goes to door.*)

RICHARD

Who's there?

AMY (*in terror*)

Oh, Dick! (*Grasps edge of table.*)

RICHARD

Don't be frightened. Who's there?

TELEGRAPH MESSENGER (*outside*)

Telegram for Mr. Leigh.

AMY (*greatly agitated*)

Don't open the door—don't open the door!

RICHARD

Why, Amy, what is the matter with you? It is only a telegram. (*Unlocks door.*)

AMY

It may be a trick—oh, don't—don't!

RICHARD (*laughing*)

Amy, you are the worst little coward I ever saw. (*Opens the door, giving glimpse of MESSENGER, who hands in a dispatch.*) All right. Any answer?

MESSENGER

Don't think so.

RICHARD

Where is your book?

(*MESSENGER hands in book. RICHARD signs*)

Bad night, isn't it?

MESSENGER

It's rotten, sir—and a fearful storm coming up.

RICHARD

I thought there was snow in the air. Here you are! (*Hands back book.*) Good night!

MESSENGER

Good night, sir.

(*RICHARD shuts door, locks it and comes down. He opens telegram and reads it.*)

RICHARD

The deuce!

AMY (*frightened*)

Oh, what is it? What has happened?

RICHARD

It's from Tom Howard. Billy is dangerously sick. (*Reads.*)

If you wish to see Billy alive, come at once.—TOM HOWARD.

Billy! Billy dying—I must go to him at once. Let me see—what time is it? I can just make that twelve o'clock train.

AMY

Go—go where?

RICHARD

Why, to Warren Run to see Billy—

AMY

Richard Leigh, do you mean to say that you would leave me tonight alone—here—with all that money?

RICHARD

But, Amy—this is death! Billy—dying—my best friend—I must go—*(Catching up his coat and getting into it.)* I'll just have time to walk to the station.

AMY *(throws herself down, the picture of despair)*

Dick, Dick, you are cruel! I shall die from fright.

RICHARD

Now, Amy, be a brave little girl. Nothing will happen to you. No one knows about the money. I know it's awful hard lines to have to go—nothing but death would take me.

(Sound of rising wind outside.)

AMY

Oh, hear the wind! How terrible—how dreary! Oh, I can't bear it, Dick. I can't be left here. If you must go, take the money with you.

RICHARD *(hat in hand, ready to go)*

No, no, dear; I couldn't take all that money with me. I might be waylaid—robbed. Here now, kiss me good-bye. *(Kisses her hastily. She does not kiss him. He buttons coat, puts on gloves.)* Now, lock up and go right to bed and to sleep like a good little girl. *(Goes up.)* Here, I'll lock the window. *(Pulls back curtain and ostentatiously locks window.)* By George, it's a cold night! You'd better get my muffler, Amy, will you, dear? It won't do for me to risk a cold.

(AMY goes slowly off at left. Directly she is gone, he looks after her, then hurriedly unlocks window and draws curtain across. AMY enters carrying large black silk muffler. He puts it about his throat.)

RICHARD

Now be sure and lock the door behind me. I've fastened the window all right. *(Going.)* Good night, darling. Don't worry. I'll be home in the morning on the nine o'clock train, sure. Have one of your nice hot breakfasts ready. Now go to bed and sleep sound-

ly—*(at door)* and don't give the confounded money a single thought. Good night! *(Exit.)*

AMY *(calling—in agony)*

Dick! Dick!

RICHARD *(outside)*

Good-bye.

(She hesitates a moment, then locks the door—looks about—draws a high-backed chair up, tips it back so that the top of the chair comes under the knob, and draws the curtain close across the window. Meantime the wind outside has risen. At times she puts her hands over her ears as if to shut out the sound. Goes to the fire—pokes it to make a brighter blaze—listens—at last goes to table, opens drawer and takes out the revolver. Handles it as a woman would who is afraid of fire-arms.)

AMY

Would I dare? Oh, I don't know. But it's my only protection now. *(Looks fearfully about.)* I'll leave it right here. *(Closes drawer.)* I suppose I'd better go to bed. But I sha'n't sleep—I sha'n't sleep. *(Goes up to window and looks out.)* Oh, what a night! What a night! *(Drops curtain and comes down. Looks about fearfully.)* I am afraid—I am afraid! How could Dick leave me alone? Oh, what can I do to compose myself? I'll read a while. *(Sits by table. Picks up paper, glances at it and reads.)* "Found murdered in her bed." Oh! *(With a terrified cry throws down the paper, then tries a book and reads to herself.)* Oh, it's no use! I don't know what I'm reading about. *(Throws down book. Picks up Bible and looks at it.)* My mother's Bible. I have heard it said that when one is in trouble, if one opens this book and reads the first verse the eyes rest on, one is sure to be comforted. I'll try it. *(Opens Bible, looks, starts, reads aloud slowly.)* "Yea, though I walk—through the valley—of the shadow of death—I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." *(Closes the Bible.)* I am answered.

(Puts her head down on table. A pause. Then she rises with determination, lowers lamp on table, goes slowly off at left. Another pause, during which the shrieking

of the wind outside is heard. Suddenly there is a noise on the porch, a fall of something heavy against the door and a moan outside. AMY enters from left in dressing gown. She is pale as death. She pauses by the mantel and listens.)

AMY

I thought I heard a sound. (*Listens intently. A moan is heard outside. She recoils—staggers back—clutches at mantel.*)

What is that?

VOICE (*outside*)

Oh, for God's sake—
(*Feeble knock on door.*)

AMY

Someone at the door. (*Creeps slowly to table—takes revolver from drawer.*)

VOICE

Oh, please let me in—I shall die—

AMY (*going toward door*)

Who is there?

VOICE

A poor man—worn out. If you have a human heart, let me come in.

AMY

A man! Oh, what shall I do—what shall I do?

VOICE

You—couldn't turn a dog—from your door—on a night like this—

AMY

It may be only a trick—oh, what shall I do?

VOICE

I am freezing—starving—

AMY (*lays revolver on table, picks up Bible, opens hurriedly and reads aloud*)

"For I was a stranger and ye took me in—"

(*Closes book—lays it down, then goes slowly to the door and looks up.*)

Oh, God, help me!

(*With one supreme effort she opens the door. The storm blows in with terrific fury. A form is lying on the porch. She stoops, takes hold of it. The man half rises and crawls with her help into the room. He lies exhausted on the floor. She locks door and puts chair back under the knob. Then looks at the man.*)

Is he dead?

JOCK (*faintly*)

No, lady, but almost.

(*She takes milk from table, puts it in*

saucepan and quickly heats it over fire, pours it into glass, kneels, lifts his head and gives it to him to drink. It revives him so that she gets him to his feet. It is then seen that he is a hunchback, very poorly dressed and with long, shaggy hair which gives him a wild and repellent look. Although his appearance visibly frightens her, she assists him to the chair before the fire, into which he sinks. She brings him food which he devours ravenously.)

AMY (*watching him intently*)

Have you been long without food?

JOCK

Since morning, lady—and dragging along these roads in such weather. (*Pauses as if unable to continue.*)

AMY

Have you no home?

JOCK

No, lady.

AMY

No friends?

JOCK

No. I am an outcast—a vagabond.

AMY (*gently*)

Poor man!

JOCK (*giving a little start*)

Thank you kindly, lady. (*Suddenly buries his face in his hands. A pause. He raises his head and looks at her.*)

It's been a long time since anyone spoke kindly to me. You are like—an angel—

AMY (*simply*)

I am glad I could help you. It's utterly out of the question for you to go on. The night is too bad. (*With an effort.*) You may remain here.

JOCK (*humbly*)

Thank you. I can sleep here—on the floor—before the fire—

AMY (*nervously*)

Oh, no, no! I will give you a good warm bed upstairs.

JOCK

Are you all alone, lady?

AMY (*terrified*)

Why do you ask? (*Retreating toward table.*)

JOCK (*seeing her fright, rises slowly and painfully*)

Don't be frightened. I am not such a monster—as I look. I couldn't

harm a hair of your head. Show me where to go, lady. I'll do just as you say.

AMY (*lights candle—opens door to stairs—gives him candle*)

The little room at the head of the stairs. It is nice and warm. Good night.

JOCK (*holding candle and looking at her with a strange, reverential look*)

Good night, lady.

(*Goes upstairs. Sound of his feet stumbling up. She shuts door at foot of stairs and softly turns the key. She sinks, exhausted from the strain, on a chair. A pause. She rises, puts away the food, tidying up about and always listening for a sound from upstairs.*)

AMY

I won't go to bed. No, I can't. I could not sleep. I'll sit here before the fire until morning. (*Sits by fire. Storm grows in fury.*)

What a night! Oh, what a night! I wonder if Dick is all right? He must be nearly there now. That man upstairs—who is he? Where did he come from? Is he honest? Why should he have come tonight of all nights? Why—why—

(*Sound of feet on porch. Someone stealthily walks to window. AMY sits as if frozen with terror.*)

Someone—there—at the window! Another (*Looking toward stairs.*) Ah! his confederate. (*She slowly rises and stands listening. A sound is heard from upstairs.*) He is coming down! They will—murder me— (*She goes to table, takes revolver from drawer. Steps are now heard coming down the stairs.*)

JOCK (*his face at glass in door. He tries the door*)

Lady! Lady!

(*She goes to door. He looks at her through the glass. She speaks in hushed whisper.*)

AMY

What do you want?

JOCK (*in low voice*)

There is someone trying to get in. I saw a man—from the window. Let me out, lady, and I will help you.

(*The person at the window is now trying to raise it. It sticks.*)

AMY

How do I know but that he is your confederate?

JOCK

Lady, trust me.

(*She slowly unlocks the door. He enters. They stand staring at each other, she in desperation, wishing to see if he is sincere in his offer of help; he, humble, docile, eager to assist her. In this intense moment she realizes she can depend upon him. She steals to the table and turns down the light.*)

AMY (*whispering*)

Can you shoot?

JOCK (*whispering*)

Yes.

AMY (*in a tense whisper*)

Listen to me. There are thousands of dollars in this house that we must defend from this thief; money that does not belong to us, but to the mill at which my husband works; money that must go to men with wives and little children depending on them. We must protect that money and my husband's honor. Don't shoot until it is necessary—until I tell you. (*Puts revolver in his hand. He glances at it, starts and examines it closely.*)

JOCK

This ain't any good, lady—it ain't loaded.

AMY

Not loaded? Why, my husband loaded it only a few days ago. Wait—wait until I get you the cartridges. (*Goes to table and feels in drawer.*) Why—they are not here! Where—where— (*Tries next drawer. The rattle of the cartridges is heard.*) Ah! Here! Here!

(*She comes down with them and gives them with trembling hands to JOCK, who quickly loads revolver. Noise at window continues. It is giving way now and is slowly being raised. Stage is dark save for the firelight. AMY and JOCK huddle back in the angle formed by staircase. A man raises the window softly and climbs in. JOCK raises revolver.*)

AMY

Not yet—not yet—

(*The man who has entered has a black handkerchief over his face, his hat pulled*

THE SMART SET

down and only his eyes visible. He pauses only a second to listen, then goes straight to the cupboard.)

AMY

Now!

(She covers her face with her hands, falling back against the wall. JOCK fires. The man's hand is on the cupboard door. He whirls around, staggers forward a step or two and falls on his face. A pause. Then AMY with averted face goes to the table, turns up the lamp and lifts it in her hand. JOCK goes to the body, turns it over, kneels by it, and feels for the heart.)

JOCK

He's dead.

(AMY looks down at the body. Something in its outline strikes her. A puzzled look comes in her face, growing into something like apprehension. She sets the lamp down carelessly on the table and takes a step or two toward the body, with a look of dreadful fascination. JOCK takes off the hat and handkerchief. AMY sees the face. She stares at it.)

AMY

My God! Dick!

(JOCK looks up at her in wonder. She stands as if slowly changing to stone, still staring at the white face on the floor.)

CURTAIN

THE BRIMMING GLASS

By CHARLTON LAWRENCE EDHOLM

MY life is but a brimming glass
To drain before the sparkle pass,
Right quickly drink and fling to earth;
The shards let lie in April grass.

Some day, perhaps, will spring a vine
Above the shards that once were mine
And, idling there, some drinker say,
"These fragments, too, once brimmed with wine."

But will the shattered glass unite
And fill again with liquid light,
Because in centuries to be
Someone will see and judge aright?

So, whether vine or laurel grow,
Or roses 'round the fragments blow,
Or simple daisies in the grass—
Today the cup's a-brim, I know.

Then be my life a brimming glass
To drain before the sparkle pass,
Right quickly drained and flung to earth—
Forgotten shards in April grass.

LES LIS DE GEORGIE

Par PIERRE MILLE

C'ÉTAIT à la fin d'un dîner, dans une maison parisienne dont je suis l'hôte assez habituel. Mais j'avais cette fois un voisin que je ne connaissais pas. Sur la carte qui lui avait indiqué sa place à table, je venais de lire son nom: Boris Tchernof. Il demeura muet assez longtemps, parce que la conversation avait été trop vive pour qu'il pût y prendre part. C'est ce qui arrive assez fréquemment, même à des étrangers qui ont pourtant une parfaite connaissance de notre langue. Il leur faut un peu de temps pour arranger leurs phrases; et quand ils ont terminé ce travail de construction nécessaire, on parle déjà d'autre chose.

Il avait des traits comme baignés dans un brouillard hyperboréen, un peu indécis, des cheveux trop blonds, des yeux très doux et vagues. C'était comme le portrait général d'une race, au lieu d'une vraie figure d'homme. Il finit par me dire, en cherchant ses mots:

— Je lis ce que vous écrivez, quelquefois. Vous ne niez pas, vous, les choses mystérieuses. Je ne dis pas que vous y croyez, mais du moins vous ne les niez pas. Voilà pourquoi je souhaisais depuis longtemps vous connaître et vous dire ce qui est arrivé une nuit. Vous ne me donnerez pas d'explication: il n'y en a pas, puisque les choses ne s'arrangent pas dans la réalité comme dans une fiction: ceci n'est pas un conte!

"Je me décidai dernièrement, poursuivit-il, à profiter d'une invitation de chasse qu'un de mes amis qui habite la province de Kherson, dans le Sud de la Russie, me renouvelait depuis plusieurs années. Je connaissais sa propriété de Kathérinovka. C'est un paradis pour

un chasseur. On y trouve de tout, depuis la gélinotte et le coq de bruyère jusqu'au chevreuil et au cerf, sans compter le loup en hiver, si le cœur vous en dit; et je ne parle pas des lièvres qui pullulent parce que les paysans se refusent à y toucher, les considérant comme des bêtes impures.

"Il y avait très longtemps que je n'étais retourné dans ma patrie: je suis un Russe déraciné, comme bien d'autres. Mais enfin, me trouvant cet automne à Vienne, je songeai que cette occasion serait bonne pour revoir un coin de Russie et essayer un fusil anglais que je venais d'acheter. J'envoyai un télégramme et je partis, sans attendre la réponse. On m'avait dit tant de fois: 'Viens quand tu voudras!' Et je connaissais si bien l'hospitalité toujours accueillante des gentilshommes russes dans les vastes demeures campagnardes!

"Je n'avais pas pensé, justement, qu'elle était trop coutumièrement accueillante: je me rappelle avec vivacité l'incroyable agitation, la gaieté retentissante qui emplissaient jusqu'à la faire éclater cette grande maison neuve en pierre blonde, au toit pointu, située au milieu d'une manière de parc dont les allées avaient été taillées en plein bois et aboutissaient à une pièce d'eau qui ne devait rien à l'art d'un dessinateur de jardins, car c'était une mare profonde, alimentée d'eau vive. Vingt-deux hôtes, dont beaucoup de jeunes femmes, un nombre double au moins de domestiques, car chacun, en Russie, ne voyage qu'accompagné d'un valet, peuplaient les galeries, les salons, les communs de cette demeure, et surtout la salle à manger, où les zakouski, la

vodka, le champagne étaient servis à toute heure du jour. On chassait, on dansait, et le soir où j'arrivai, bien après le dîner, on jouait gros jeu. Mon ami C... m'embrassa—car nous nous embrassons encore, en Russie, comme vous faisiez au dix-septième siècle—et me présenta tout de suite à sa mère. Cependant, j'eus l'impression, malgré la chaleur de cet accueil, d'une espèce d'embarras, d'une inquiétude, comme si je n'eusse pas été tout à fait le bienvenu. Mais la cause de cette hésitation quand elle me fut expliquée, était si naturelle: il n'y avait plus de place, plus un lit dans la maison! Je mis à rire.

— Envoyez-moi chez l'habitant, fis-je.

— Mais non, dit C... en interrogeant sa mère du regard. Il y a encore la vieille maison...

— Mme C... s'inclina d'un air assez mélancolique.

«Ce fut ainsi que je m'en fus loger dans ce qu'on appelait l'ancienne maison. Et je ne fus pas peu surpris, en la voyant, qu'on l'eût abandonnée. C'était à proprement parler, un château construit vers le milieu du dix-huitième siècle sur le modèle français qui, à cette époque, régna dans toute l'Europe. Un portique à colonnes doriques, des pilastres droits encastrés dans le bâtiment, de ces pilastres à cannelures creuses semblables à celles des armoires et des bibliothèques de style Louis XVI, donnaient à sa façade un air de simplicité digne, de noblesse sans faste. Mais, des vastes pièces du rez-de-chaussée, on avait enlevé presque tous les meubles, et quand, précédé par deux valets qui portaient des candélabres, et suivi par mon domestique, je pénétrai dans la chambre où je devais coucher, j'avais déjà compris que je serais cette nuit-là le seul hôte de l'ancienne maison, et que depuis des années personne n'y logeait plus. Vous le savez bien, n'est-ce pas, que les demeures abandonnées ne parlent pas de la même manière que les autres, qu'elles n'ont plus la même voix que le bruit des pas semble s'enfoncer dans des trous d'ombre et en rejaillit en échos tout changés?

«Les deux valets posèrent leurs candélabres sur une large table et s'en allèrent assez précipitamment. Mon domestique Ivan, qui me parut avoir été traité avec un peu trop de générosité à l'office, m'aida fort maladroitement à faire ma toilette de nuit et s'étendit tout habillé dans le corridor, devant ma porte fermée. Ce n'était pas que j'eusse alors la moindre appréhension; mais vous savez que c'est notre habitude en voyage, dans les provinces russes, de nous faire ainsi garder.

«Je lus quelques pages d'un ouvrage que j'avais emporté dans ma valise: c'était, je m'en souviens, un petit volume intelligent et spirituel de Samat: *Mes chasses de Provence*; puis je soufflai ma bougie. Mais je n'eus pas plus tôt reposé ma tête sur l'oreiller que j'éprouvai cette sensation que vous connaissez peut-être: on l'éprouve quand on se réveille en sursaut ou qu'on a pris une tasse de café trop fort. C'est le cœur qui bat précipitamment dans la poitrine, comme si on venait d'échapper à un grand danger ou de subir une émotion très brusque: et on n'a connu aucun danger, on n'a souffert aucun choc moral. C'est la peur sans cause, l'angoisse nocturne qui vient presque toujours, comme je vous l'ai dit, et j'ai appris assez de psychologie pour le savoir, d'un réveil subit qui trouble la circulation sanguine, ou de l'action d'un excitant nerveux sur les mouvements du cœur. Mais moi qui ne m'étais pas éveillé en sursaut, puisque je n'avais pas dormi encore, et qui n'avais pas pris de café ce soir-là! Et je sentais pourtant sous le sein gauche cet insupportable tremblement qui gagne tout le corps, atteint les doigts, fait claquer la langue contra les dents. Mes yeux, considérant l'obscurité, me communiquaient l'impression absurde et puérile que ce n'était pas l'obscurité ordinaire que rencontraient leurs regards, mais une chose, une chose invisible qu'avec un sixième sens j'aurais pu distinguer.

«J'allumai une bougie. Comme je m'y attendais, le baldaquin du lit à l'ancienne mode, une énorme armoire d'ébène, la grande table, orientale

d'aspect à cause de ses incrustations de nacre, sur laquelle on avait mis des candélabres, toutes ces choses étaient à leur place et gardaient l'aspect le plus débonnaire. Cette chambre-là avait du vivre dans l'innocence depuis le jour où les menuisiers avaient plaqué les boiseries sur les murailles jusqu'à cette nuit même.

"Je me levai et j'ouvris vivement ma porte. Ivan, me disais-je, avait absorbé une trop forte dose de vodka pour ne pas dormir à poings fermés. Il me faudrait le réveiller. A ma grande surprise, je le trouvai les yeux grands ouverts et à genoux, priant de toutes ses forces Nicolas, Nicéphore, Basile, son patron et les autres saints du paradis. Il n'avait rien vu d'extraordinaire, dit-il, mais il savait bien comment les âmes en peine se font annoncer.

"— Donne-moi mes habits, lui dis-je assez brutalement parce que j'avais les nerfs secoués.

"Je ne manque pas de sang-froid habituellement et j'essayais de raisonner sur ce sentiment d'insupportable angoisse qui nous avait pris tous les deux. Ou bien il avait pour cause un retour à l'enfance, la peur qu'on a la nuit, tout enfant, quand on vous laisse seul. Et nous étions, en effet, seuls, abandonnés dans cette énorme maison. Ou bien il y avait un ennemi dehors, des gens dont nous pressentions l'approche et les mauvaises intentions. Une fois habillé, je mis encore ma pelisse, et, descendant l'escalier, puis ouvrant la porte qui donnait sur le perron dorique, je m'aventurai dehors, toujours suivi d'Ivan.

"Rien! Rien qu'un grand silence, les arbres noirs qui n'avaient pas un frisson, l'étang tout calme et tout pâle sous un croissant de lune mince comme un fil. Je fis quelques pas en avant, et je me retournai. Alors, le château m'apparut, très paisible aussi sous cette lueur légère. Seulement, une des fenêtres était éclairée.

"— Tu n'as pas éteint les bougies avant de sortir? demandai-je à Ivan.

"— Si, j'ai éteint, répondit Ivan, j'ai tout éteint, et...et ce n'est pas là

que tu couches, barine. Tu couches à l'autre bout de la maison.

"Ce fut pour moi une espèce de soulagement de savoir qu'un autre homme, et un vivant, oui, un vivant, logeait cette nuit près de moi! Et pourtant, sans doute, il avait peur comme moi, puisque lui aussi il n'avait pas dormi, se réfugiant dans la lumière. Je résolus de lui rendre visite.

"Je rentrai, nous nous perdîmes dans les corridors, nous ouvrîmes des portes qui n'ouvraient que sur l'abandon et le vide. Nous finîmes par appeler—et personne ne répondit! Mais, à la fin, Ivan me montra un mince filet clair dessiné sur les carreaux de pierre du couloir:

"—Voilà la chambre, dit-il, la chambre où elle est, la lumière!

"Je frappai. Nulle réponse. Je frappai encore. Un silence horrible. Et je ne sais comment j'eus le courage d'ouvrir la porte de cette chambre! Notre peur, alors, était devenue si forte et si lâche que nous étions tout blemes... La pièce apparut, illuminée comme une chapelle. Elle était vaste, somptueuse, étrangement lugubre aussi et inhabitée, inhabitée! Seulement, le lit, où nul n'était couché, avait été 'fait' par les mains d'une femme attentive, et des lis, des gerbes de lis de Géorgie, couvraient ces draps blancs de leur autre blancheur. Et, devant un grand portrait, qui représentait un vieillard en costume de chasse, le fouet à la main, d'autres lis, sur une table, fleurissaient, dans un beau vase, entre deux cierges.

"— Le mort! dit Ivan, le mort qui est dans cette chambre...

"— Il n'y a pas de mort, lui répliquai-je, le lit est vide, tu vois bien...

"— Mais, il est ici tout de même, dit Ivan.

"Il était maintenant très calme, et se mit de nouveau à réciter des prières. Mais il n'avait plus sa figure épouvantée. On aurait dit qu'il savait. Il pria comme à l'église, et moi-même demeurai là, jusqu'à l'aube, sentant que c'était encore là que j'aurais le moins peur.

"Le lendemain, je retrouvai les

hôtes de 'la nouvelle maison.' Mon ami C...me demanda.

"— Tu as dormi?"

"— Non, lui avouai-je franchement.

"Et je lui racontai les événements de la nuit.

"— Oui, fit-il, ma mère veut qu'il y ait toujours de la lumière dans cette

pièce, où mon père est mort, il y a cinq ans. Et même ceux à qui on ne le dit pas, ils savent qu'il y a eu un mort, un homme qu'on a ramené un jour dans ce lit, agonisant, un coup de feu dans la poitrine. Ils le devinent, ils le devinent, on ne peut plus habiter dans cette maison..."

LES SOUVENIRS

Par FERNAND GREGH

LA langueur de la brume enveloppe les bois,
Et le murmure des feuilles mortes achève,
En tournoyant au vent d'automne, le long rêve
Qu'elles berçaient joyeux aux brises d'autrefois!

Au loin, l'allée en deuil se voile de sa fuite,
Comme ces voyageurs qui détournent les yeux,
Et dont l'angoisse trop proche des pleurs évite
Les regards fascinants qu'emplissent les adieux.

Ces grands arbres penchés là-bas sur l'étang morne,
Comme un visage en pleurs sur un miroir terni,
Berçaient en eux l'azur comme un rêve infini...
O rêves dont la brume ou la vie est la borne!

Des pauvres vont glanant leurs misérables feux.
Tout l'été va renaître aux flammes hivernales...
Ainsi mon triste cœur, pour les heures finales,
Glane les souvenirs de ses étés joyeux
Qui, dans son noir ennui, jetteront de grands feux!

WE have all the time there is, but the Devil takes care to supply
a few of us with time to burn.

WHAT EVERY WOMAN KNOWS— AND MORE

By CHANNING POLLOCK

WE dropped in on the Wylie family just after dinner.

Alick and David were playing chess, and neither of them spoke a word for a minute or two after the curtain rose. Then the third brother, James, came into the room, and, after him, their quaint, quiet, spinster sister, Maggie Wylie.

Maggie was a gray little lady. Alick and David agreed regretfully that she lacked the queer thing called charm, but, Maggie being in reality none other than Maude Adams, of course you will see at once that this couldn't have been true. Anyway, nobody had ever courted Miss Wylie, and her brothers, who loved her with a big tenderness, were greatly worried and sympathetic. Beauty may be only skin deep, but one can't cut a patch out of a girl, as a fruit dealer does out of a watermelon, to show the world what is beneath.

Presently, Maggie's brothers confided to her that they were sitting up late to receive a burglar. On several previous occasions someone had been seen to enter the house by a window, and, though nothing had been disturbed but the lock, the Wylies had planned to have a look at the marauder. Accordingly, they turned out the lights, and waited. Within a moment or two the sash was raised stealthily, and John Shand crept into view. He walked straight to the bookcase, and, taking down a ponderous volume, began to read. The Wylies, who were rich but uneducated quarrymen, had purchased "ten yards of books" for ornamental purposes. (I once heard of an illiterate millionaire who bought fifty yards

of literature from Dodd, Mead & Co. "What would he say," I inquired, "if somebody asked him what was in those books?" "I'm not sure," replied my friend, "but he *might* answer: 'Dodd only knows!'"

Be that as it may, the Wylies came out of hiding and caught John read handed. (It's an atrocious pun, but I couldn't resist the temptation.) "You must be a thief," said David. "Else, why slip in by the window?"

"Do you suppose," retorted John, an hereditary enemy of the Wylies, "that a Shand would so far lower himself as to enter your door?"

They wormed a confession from him. John had worked as a railway porter to get an education, but he had no money to buy books, and so he had adopted this burglarious method of study. Twice or thrice a week he had forced his way into the Wylie home, there to pore for hours over the precious tomes. John felt very sure that a great career lay before him if he could only get his feet upon the path. "It's the filthy lucre!" he exclaimed bitterly.

Whereat, one of the Wylies admonished him: "Don't be blasphemous!"

But even at that instant a great idea had been born in the mind of David Wylie. He retired to consult with Alick, and returned with a proposition. John Shand might come when he pleased to pick and choose from the "ten yards of books," and, moreover, they would give him three hundred pounds with which to complete his schooling—on one condition. What was the condition? Why, simply that he bind himself to marry Maggie. The brothers

had huge hopes of that expected career, and it would be good to have so ambitious and energetic a man in the family. Of course Maggie was much sought, but . . . "How old is she?" inquired John Shand.

"Twenty-five," said David.

Then up rose Maggie and declared that she would not be betrothed under false pretenses. She had never been sought at all, and, moreover, she wasn't twenty-five. She was twenty-six. John haggled and hesitated, but finally accepted the offer, so that, after the brothers had overcome many difficulties raised by the maidenly delicacy of their sister, who—poor girl!—wanted at least the semblance of a wooing, the bargain was struck and John went home. The excitement of the evening had taken away his appetite for study.

Maggie escorted him to the door. "Wasn't it noble of the girl to insist upon telling that she was twenty-six!" remarked one of her brothers. Then, after a pause: "I thought she was twenty-seven!"

In a short while Maggie returned and bade her brothers good night. They were awfully good to her, she said, with a little catch in her voice. She kissed David and Alick and James, who went upstairs to bed, leaving her alone, a pathetic little figure, pendulating between joy and pain, pride and humiliation. "I'll try to be a good wife to him," she promised.

J. M. BARRIE, whom Charles Darn-ton, in the *Evening World*, calls "the uncanny Scot," never in his life wrote anything more whimsical and tender than this first act of "What Every Woman Knows." If he had been able to keep his pace throughout the other three acts, the new comedy, in which Miss Adams made her bow to Broadway just before Christmas at the Empire Theater, would have been as fine a work as "Peter Pan" or "The Little Minister." That it is not the equal of these earlier efforts is no sufficient reason why you shouldn't see it. Barrie's lowest range is higher than the highest of most other dramatists, and a

piece need not be the peer of "Peter Pan," but only as good as "Quality Street," "The Admirable Crichton" and "The Professor's Love Story," and a little better than "Alice Sit-by-the-Fire" and "Little Mary," to be a very good play indeed.

Six years after the events narrated in the beginning of my story, John Shand was elected to Parliament. Maggie was not yet Mrs. Shand, but she was very proud of him, and fond of him, too, as were all the big Wylies. She was so proud and so fond that, having made what she considered a failure of her attempt to live up to him before those grand persons, the Comtesse de la Brière and Lady Sybil Lazenby, she tore up the contract made between Shand and her brothers and gave John back his freedom. To his everlasting credit be it said that John, unsentimental, lumbering, blundering, overwhelmingly ambitious lout that he was, refused to accept the gift. "A bargain's a bargain," he insisted, and, when a cheering throng of voters broke into his headquarters, he mounted a table and announced that he was engaged to Maggie Wylie.

"Where is she?" demanded a husky elector.

"I'm here," piped Maggie, from the rear of the crowd.

"Where?" said John Shand.

"I'm here," repeated Maggie, "but I'm so little you can't see me."

Sweet symbol—those words—of the place gentle Maggie Wylie was to occupy in the life of big John Shand.

In the next act we saw John on the high road to fame. He had made a great record in Parliament, and his speeches were much admired for a bristling form of wit that had come to be described as "Shandisms." Nobody suspected—John least of all—that these remarks really should have been called "Mrs. Shandisms," since it was Mrs. Shand who stuck them into his otherwise commonplace speeches when she was typewriting them. John was eminently self-satisfied, and not the least in love with Maggie. "I think one would have to have a sense

of humor to be fond of me," Maggie once observed, and John had no more humor than an adding machine.

We all sat bolt upright and gasped soon afterward when John Shand, M.P., began whispering soft nothings to Lady Sybil Lazenby, F. O. O. L. It was a great shock, and, though such is the nature of mankind, we had had no premonition. Maggie caught them at it, and confessed the affair to her brothers, who had come on a visit. They were amazed at her solicitude for him "after the way he has treated you."

"What does the way he treats me matter?" said Maggie. "He's just my little boy."

Oh, the exquisite maternalism in the love of women, and, oh, the world-wide sympathy and understanding of Mr. James Matthew Barrie, of Kirriemuir, Forfarshire, Scotland!

But Maggie was wise as well as kind. It takes a tremendously good wife to have a good husband, and perhaps *that* is what every woman knows. Maggie knew it, for certain, and so she sent John off with Lady Sybil to enjoy her society as much as he pleased and to benefit by her counsel in preparing the speech that was to be his greatest effort. Of course, the speech proved a dead failure, and, equally of course, John and Lady Sybil got sick unto death of each other. Then Maggie arrived with a copy of the oration, made on that inspired typewriter of hers, (if one only knew where such a machine was to be bought!) and John awakened to the fact that the soft arms of the little woman who loved him had drawn him to a place in the world which he could never have gained by his own ability.

Then, and then only, did Maggie tell John what it is that Mr. Barrie thinks every woman knows. "Woman wasn't made from one of Adam's ribs," she said, "but from his funny bone."

And John laughed.

You won't need my prompting to inform you that all this is much more commonplace, more conventional, than the fanciful incidents of that bully first

act. Neither is it so rich in quaint touches, lacking the fulness of "Peter Pan" and "Quality Street." Mr. Barrie's plays are always unsubstantial, and there are moments when "What Every Woman Knows" seems attenuated, as well. There are other moments, and they are in the majority, when the piece grips you irresistibly, touching you with such an inseparable blending of humor and pathos as makes you uncertain whether you are laughing or swallowing your Adam's apple, and leaves you feeling very much as though the elevator had started down suddenly.

I hope the word "conventional" won't lead you to think that Mr. Barrie has written a methodical melodrama—the sort of cut-to-measure, tailor-made thing that so often gets into Broadway theaters disguised as a "play." On the contrary, "What Every Woman Knows" is notable for a complete lack of the tugging and straining for effect that so frequently characterizes even A. W. Pinero. The author of "Sentimental Tommy" couldn't possibly care whether his story led into situations or not. Only the last three acts of the piece at the Empire are less uncommon than most of Barrie, and the fragrance of the spots grown green with his wit and kindness make the sterility of the barren places seem more utterly utter.

Whenever one has grown terribly tired of Lady Sybil, however, or distressed at the machinery of the Comtesse one is charmed afresh at some new whimsical illumination of the essential truths of life. The mother instinct in Maggie's love for her husband, the comradeship of her brothers' regard for Maggie, the hard headed practicality of that most unheroic of heroes, John Shand, reminds us that we are hearing the work of a dramatist who doesn't belong to the union. Barrie is splendid in his humanness, in his irony, in his uncanniness, his piquancy, his audacity. He is George Bernard Shaw with a heart. His worst work would be well worth seeing—and Miss Adams's latest vehicle is very far from being his worst. The play is sure of a long run at the

Empire. All New York will want to know "What Every Woman Knows."

Miss Adams is as delightful, as eerie as ever. No one on our stage has a more appealing personality, and no one has a more effective collection of tricks. That little catch of her breath—half a laugh, half a sob—is irresistible. She reminds me constantly of a saucy little sparrow, and, when she is in trouble, or pretends to be, I am sorry as I can be sorry only for something or someone quite helpless. If she acted a trifle more than usual at the first performance, striving a bit more consciously for her effects, it may have been only because she was nervous. Miss Adams must have found it a dreadful job to seem a woman without charm. I can as easily imagine James J. Corbett as Jacqueline in "Love Watches"!

In the role of John Shand, Richard Bennett stopped being a very nice young man and became a very good actor. This is the year of the leading man—Holbrook Blinn in "Salvation Nell," Ernest Lawford in "Love Watches" and Arthur Byron in "Samson"—and no one could imagine a more convincing portrayal than Mr. Bennett's. David Torrence, R. Peyton Carter and Fred Tyler play the three brothers with homely force and plain distinction, while Lumsden Hare is authoritative as a certain cabinet minister. I thought Beatrice Agnew a weak and colorless Lady Sybil, and Ffolliott Paget, as the Comtesse, is as little like a gentlewoman and as fearfully out of the picture as possible.

I hope I haven't written a great deal too much on this subject. "What Every Woman Knows" is well worth writing about, and there aren't many plays in our midst this season that tempt one to tarry with the typist.

MAXINE ELLIOTT'S THEATER was opened to the public on the thirtieth of December, enabling us to begin the New Year with fifty-three playhouses in operation on Manhattan Island. The building, a simple and elegant structure, with a façade of white marble, stands in Thirty-ninth Street, nearly opposite

the family entrance of the Casino. Its auditorium, as disclosed on the evening in question, is as comfortable, and as cheerful and agreeable to the eye, as any in the city. The color scheme is old ivory, with panelings of sea-foam green, or very pale yellow, or something of the sort. On either side of the proscenium is a massive Corinthian—or Greek—maybe it's Doric—column of Carrara. You see, I'm not strong on architecture, but I do know loveliness when I find it, and I do appreciate comfort, and Maxine Elliott's Theater is both lovely and comfortable.

It was very charming to see Miss Elliott, radiant with happiness, bowing her thanks for the greeting given her in her first professional home. I remember having admired Miss Elliott a long while ago at the American, then almost as new a theater as her own is now, in a melodrama called "The Prodigal Daughter," and, reflecting upon the advance which she has made in every way since that time, I couldn't help feeling a personal pleasure in the consummation of her ambition. Maxine Elliott today is an extremely clever actress—far too clever to be confined to the wishy-washy, wine-and-watery parts to which she has recently condemned herself. She was delightful the other night, small as were her opportunities in the title role of Marion Fairfax's comedy, "The Chaperon."

This play was the least satisfactory feature of the house warming. "The Chaperon" is a dramaturgic vacuum. Never before have I heard so much said about so little. A lot of thoroughly uninteresting characters talk, talk, talk—and not very brightly, either—for three acts about a story that wouldn't be a bit important even if there were any possibility of its being true. The same theme was handled with equal completeness in twenty minutes of an old comedietta, which, if I am not mistaken, is published by T. Henry French under the title of "On an Island." Madge Hemmingsway, "jilted" by Jim Ogden, has married the Count Van Tuyle. She is suing him for divorce, and he is trying to find

material for a counterclaim, when Madge and Jim are canoe-wrecked on an island, where they are obliged to spend the night together. The affair is further complicated by the fact that Madge has agreed to chaperon a bungalow full of young women, all of whom manage to get engaged during her absence. In the end, the Count is bought off, and we are led to believe that the Countess will marry Jim.

It is a disagreeable duty to say unkind things about a piece produced under these circumstances, and I'm glad it's over. Miss Elliott certainly did her share, and more, to make the occasion an unalloyed delight. She cast the comedy effectively, and she staged it more beautifully than anything else has been staged this season. After all, it is the playhouse and not the play that counts. Plays may come, and "The Chaperon" will go, but Maxine Elliott's Theater will run on forever. Or, at least, for a very long time.

WE have had so many plays like "The Lion and the Mouse," written from the viewpoint of the mouse, that it is rather pleasant to find the lion turning in Cleveland Moffett's "The Battle," which has Wilton Lackaye as its generalissimo at the Savoy Theater. This absorbing four-act drama was penned with the purpose of proving that even a good man may make money, and that it is just possible for a poor man to be somewhat to blame for his poverty. The doctrine is not apt to become popular—we all like to be credited with our successes and to tax someone else with our failures—but it will stir up argument, and so Mr. Moffett's piece may sail to prosperity, as a boat sometimes sails, against the wind.

"The Battle," judged simply as an entertainment, seems singularly uneven. So long as its author sticks to sociology, the play is vital, convincing and strikingly original; when he takes up the thread of his love story it becomes silly, maudlin and conventional. John J. Haggleton, a multimillionaire, goes

into the slums to one of his own tenements in search of his son, who has been carried away in infancy by Mrs. John J. He finds this boy converted to the doctrines of Socialism, and remains in the tumble-down rookery with the purpose of proving to him that the right kind of a man can always triumph over the wrongest kind of conditions. So far, so good, and so very, very interesting! But Haggleton's son is enamored of a professional nurse named Margaret Lawrence, who, when she finds that papa has forty million dollars, refuses to have anything to do with so tainted a family. And then Philip, the son, suggests that papa throw away thirty-nine million, five hundred thousand of the forty millions, and somebody whose child has been ruined comes in to shoot papa and pinky Philip. Which, as you will observe, is the wobbliest possible sort of Thomas-rot.

The amateur romance, moreover, is fringed with scores of loose strings that seem to have no connection either with the story or the argument. The main issue is clogged and concealed by this superfluous material. Plagued with a dozen incidents that lead nowhere, one leaves the theater wanting to ask Mr. Moffett a lot of questions that have nothing to do with Socialism. What in the name of Anthony Comstock was the use of the scene in which a girl of the street smeared gold paint on her chest and tried to tempt Philip? Whose children were they who ambled about the stage through the first half of Act I? Did the diver ever come up who was left at the bottom of the sea when the curtain fell on Act II? Who was the "Benny" of whose death we were informed bathetically in Act III, and—equally, if not more, important—how old is Ann?

Seriously, however, and in spite of its plot, "The Battle" is better worth seeing than almost any other play in town. It is a mental and moral motor of four hundred brain-power. I haven't been on Broadway long enough to be cured of the wish to think in the theater. I confess a strong predilec-

tion for dramatic pills, especially when they are sugar coated. "The Battle" is a pill, as well as a motor, and, once you have swallowed it, you find it doing a lot of fine controversial work in your system. Mr. Moffett's wit is so poignant, his reasoning is so sound and his understanding of mankind is so undisputable. Thus, when the young chap who has cordially hated capital, sniffing an opportunity to become a capitalist himself, begins amending his prejudices, you smile in appreciation of this comprehension of poor, frail human nature. The champion of the down-trodden poor who, once he gets an interest in a bakery business, schemes to decrease the amount of flour in each loaf without decreasing the size of the loaves, is a delicious touch. Some of the dialogue, notably Haggleton's dissertation on contempt of law, is a rare combination of good humor and good sense. And there are a dozen clever laughing-lines, as when somebody, speaking of tainted money, delivers himself of the opinion that "the more taint the more 'tis!"

Mr. Lackaye's performance of Haggleton is sincere and impressive, and the acting of his supporters, in the main, is quite adequate. "The Battle" is pretty sure to be won. Whatever may be said *against*, there is this to be said *for* the play: it's about something!

In the past I have so often been unappreciative of the Henry W. Savage productions as to be credited, among those interested, with bearing a grudge. A nice young man in the Savage office once went so far as to write a letter protesting against my being permitted to appear in print at all, and I was not among the happy crickets who received cordial invitations to attend the initial performance of Edith Ellis's new comedy, "Mary Jane's Pa," in which Mr. Savage presents Henry E. Dixey at the Garden.

All this being true, it gives me uncommon pleasure to testify that this same "Mary Jane's Pa" is one of the sweetest, cleanest and most agreeable plays I have seen in a very long time.

It is homely stuff, and home-y stuff, and good, honest, all-wool-and-a-yard-wide sentiment. Moreover, it contains a great deal of quaint and poetic humor—at least one of its scenes, in which is related the adventures of a family of birds yclept the Dippy Doll Dubs, being quite worthy of Eugene Field or Robert Louis Stevenson.

Mary Jane's Pa is Hiram Perkins, a country printer, who, wearying of the prosiness of life in general and his name in particular, has abandoned wife and family for a ramble about the world. A genial sort of Beloved Vagabond, this Perkins, and when, after many years, he drops into the little newspaper office which his wife has established at Gosport, Indiana, one feels a sympathetic interest in his efforts to win back Mrs. Perkins. Hiram, being unable to contribute to the support of the household, goes to work as the "hired girl," in which situation he remains until village gossip stirs up a mob, and he is requested to quit town. Then Portia Perkins tells the truth, and Hiram settles down in the bosom of a reunited family.

A man of the genius of David Warfield might do wonders with such a part as this title role, but Mr. Dixey is eminently satisfactory, and so are the majority of his company. Ann Sutherland is particularly manly and womanly as the Amazonian Portia, and Edward Chapman, as a village Jehu who keeps hacks full of "drummers" waiting while he supplies "items" for the paper, tickled me more than a camel's-hair shirt.

It is a pretty hard job to make a hero out of a tenor, and so I doubt whether Patrick Bidwell's "Peggy Machree" would have "got by" at the Broadway, even if it hadn't been a dramatic anachronism. The piece belongs to the days when "I want me rint" was considered a soul-stirring line, and the most modest stage chamber had a magnificent pillared and arched "center door fancy." "Peggy Machree" is a primitive play, bristling with Irish sentiment that may still please simple souls on the road,

but it is hardly likely to attract serious attention in New York.

Joseph O'Mara, the star, makes his first appearance in America since he sang in Harry B. Smith and Reginald De Koven's opera, "The Three Dragons." He has a marvelously sweet voice, which would be even more agreeable if its charm were not marred by constant affectation. Such a fine old ballad as "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms," for example, is sung most delightfully when it is sung most simply. Nevertheless, Mr. O'Mara's tenor is worth while, and, if you are willing to sit through dog and pony shows and "sidewalk conversations" to witness "The Submarine" or "Awake at the Switch," you may be willing to sit through "Peggy Machree" to hear "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms."

"THE WINTERFEAST," at the Savoy, did not last beyond the *hors d'œuvres*. Charles R. Kennedy's successor to "The Servant in the House" was a mightily impressive drama, and its failure provides a reliable indication of the scarcity of thoughtful people in Gotham.

For a bright, lively show, pleasantly free from coarseness, permit me to commend to you "Mr. Hamlet of Broadway," in which Eddie Foy is disporting himself at the Casino. This latest work of Edgar Smith, who is in a very fair way to outdo his brother, Harry B., has a plentiful sprinkling of wit, a good deal of pleasant fooling, and so much of the champagne quality that one isn't bored even in the desert spots. Ben M. Jerome's music may not be exactly original—that would be too much to expect—but it fits itself beautifully into the pucker of one's lips. "Under the Honeymoon" is a corking melody, ingeniously staged, while Mr. Foy's new song, "Everything Depends on Money," is the best he has had since "The Ghost That Never Walked." Maude Raymond warbles a ditty, called "My Dusky Salome," which is well worth hearing, and, for good measure, there are "Won't You Harmonize With Me?"

"The Hornpipe Rag" and "That's As Far As You Can Go."

"Mr. Hamlet of Broadway" begins at a summer hotel, Starvation Inn, Lake Mosquito, where Mrs. Barnaby Bustle has planned to give an *al fresco* performance of "Hamlet." The professional actor who was to have had the title role fails to appear, so the landlord pawns off in his stead a stranded circus clown—the same being Eddie Foy. The "Hamlet" presented is a most amusing burlesque, which Mr. Foy, who in a straight make-up actually looks not unlike Edwin Booth, interprets with skill for which he has never before been given credit. The supporting company, including Laura Guerite and a really manly tenor, is clever, and the chorus looks fetching in a succession of unusually natty costumes.

THE gentleman whose wife, being told that he attended the theater to "hear the new ditties," replied, "You mean, to see the nudities," must have been caught at the Circle and "The Queen of the Moulin Rouge." Clothes may make the man, but it is the lack of them which makes modern musical comedy, and the reputation for naughtiness has drawn hopeful crowds to witness this new work of Paul Potter and John T. Hall. They do say that even the statue of Christopher Columbus, which, unfortunately, was erected with its back to the Circle Theater, has been found to have turned its head a little since the opening of this play.

Not that "The Queen of the Moulin Rouge" really offers anything unprecedented in the way of beauty unadorned. That would be rather difficult in a town that has been edified by seeing Gertrude Hoffman, Eva Tanguay, Valeska Suratt, Maude Odell, Annette Kellermann, Somebody's "Three Golden Graces" and Somebody Else's "Bare Bronze Beauties." But Mr. Potter, whose story takes a mythical king and princess on a round of the night resorts of Paris, doesn't miss much that is known to the American deacon on a Cook's Tour, and the result is an atmosphere of utter salaciousness. There

isn't much comedy in the piece, but Mr. Hall has written two or three good tunes, and the management has provided a great deal that is attractive to the eye. The chorus contains the usual number of "ox-eyed goddesses," and per-ox-eyed goddesses, eight of whom appear practically *au naturel* on floats in a representation of the Four Arts' Ball. These, and some others, undress again in full view of the audience, during the course of a song called "Take That Off, Too." If you were a stranger in the city you might think that "The Queen of the Moulin Rouge" had been written, not by a dramatist, but by a French maid.

"MADE IN AMERICA" is the line printed under the title on the programs of "The Prima Donna" at the Knickerbocker. It isn't quite clear whether the phrase is meant as a boast or as an apology, but if it is the former it seems rather foolish in a theater that has just housed an exquisite operetta, "The Girls of Gottenberg," marred only by interpolations, human and orchestral, "made in America."

Fritzi Scheff's personal charm and popularity have brought prosperity to "The Prima Donna," but, both as to book and as to score, this latest work of Henry Blossom and Victor Herbert is a long way behind "Mlle. Modiste." Mr. Blossom has relied, for his libretto, upon the trite story of the celebrated *chanteuse* who makes an obscure composer famous by singing his songs, and then marries him. Mr. Herbert is writing rather too much music nowadays to write very good music. When, as is often the case, it takes more composers to make a score than it does tailors to make a man, no one need be surprised that one composer can't make five or six scores every year.

"The Prima Donna" is beautifully put on, and has every advantage that a prodigal producer can give it. A mistake in stage management is made in trusting one or two rather important little episodes to the chorus. Choruses should be seen and not heard.

"THE PIED PIPER" is a great idea gone wrong—oh, very, very wrong!

I wonder why it is so difficult for us in New York to get any kind of musical entertainment unspoiled by the taint of the Midas touch.

"The Pied Piper," written by Austin Strong, author of "The Toymaker of Nuremberg," was originally a whimsical and idyllic fantasy, charming in its poetry and its quaint humor. Inexpressibly cheapened and vulgarized, it finally reached the Majestic Theater, where, locked to the level of its Broadway brothers, it failed in spite of the excellent work done by De Wolf Hopper and Marguerite Clark, who was "specially engaged"—whatever that means! A lot of other people, not especially, but just ordinarily engaged, did effective work in making the piece prosaic and commonplace.

Mr. Strong's Piper entered his story some centuries after abducting the babes of Hamelin. He had shut his charges up in a mountain, Father Time having promised him immortality if he could found and maintain a City of Innocence. Hid away from the outside world, generation after generation of these people grew up with the minds of little children. Every couple was allowed one boy and one girl, and, when they matured, the Piper picked each a mate for the other. This system prevented overcrowding and was generally satisfactory, until an accident occurred. The second child of the Piper's most model pair proved to be twins. That made difficulties for everybody, and particularly for the Piper, who was obliged to bring in someone from the outside world to be husband to the odd little girl. The outsider upset the whole regime, and very nearly cost the wholesale kidnapper his city and his immortality.

That was the *original* Pied Piper, but the Piper at the Majestic was pried in a very different way, and if you don't know what I mean by that, ask your printer.

THE LITERARY OLIO

By H. L. MENCKEN

BOOKS upon the occult and the incredible seem to be driving the great American novel to the wall. I went into a bookstore the other day and stood agape before a towering pyramid of Dr. Worcester's "Religion and Medicine." One salesman seemed to be devoting his whole time to it and at least half a dozen women were buying. There were copies in sedate black cloth, copies in cloth of other hues and copies in quasi-morocco. Some, again, were printed upon thin, opaque paper and bound chastely in limp leather, like Oxford Bibles! No doubt there are fair devotees who will take these last to church and employ them in "concentrating" against indigestion between psalm and sermon. May the inspired words of the reverend sooth-sayerblast their impious stomachaches!

Moving along, I came upon other pyramids of somewhat less altitude—one made up of the collected works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, founder and high priest of our present passion for the New Thought; one of Christian Science litanies and philippics; one of Hindoo near-philosophy; and one, finally, of Hamlin Garland's latest lucubration, "THE SHADOW WORLD" (*Harpers*, \$1.50). "THE SHADOW WORLD" seemed to be going very well, indeed. A gentleman wearing copious whiskers and medicated underwear—I know it was medicated because it peeped shyly but scarletly from beneath his carefully shaved cuffs—bought two copies; a young girl of twenty or thereabout bought one, and another girl, this time of forty plus, bought another. So I went home and read the copy that had been waiting

on my workbench for two weeks. It took me three hours to read it, and I enjoyed every moment. It is, indeed, almost as entertaining as "Alice in Wonderland"—which, in more than one respect, it resembles.

Mr. Garland takes great pains to assure us at the start that he is a man of alert and pellucid intellect and without prejudices or superstitions. He has no patience with those who believe too readily or too virulently. For him the scientific method—the method which examines evidence cynically and keeps on doubting until the accumulated proof, piled mountain-high, sweeps down in an overwhelming avalanche.

Accordingly, Mr. Garland proceeds to the haunted chamber and begins his personal dalliance with the spooks. They touch him with clammy, spectral hands; they wring music for him out of locked pianos; they throw heavy tables about the room; they give him messages from the golden shore and make him the butt of their coarse wit. Through it all he sits tight and solemn, with his mind wide open and his verdict up his sleeve. He is belligerently fair and belligerent in maintaining fairness. He calls attention to it time and again, and seems not a little proud of it. And then, in the end, Mr. Garland, with delicious ingenuousness, shows us how much we are to depend upon all these pompous assurances of neutrality. One of his fellow "scientists," more frankly credulous, expresses the belief that real scientists will soon prove the existence of spirits. "I hope they will," says Garland, naively.

For all his solemn talk of scientific test conditions, Garland is apparently

entirely unacquainted with the experimental methods of true scientists. He grants a medium's demand for darkness, and then tacitly accepts her ridiculous explanation of her need for it. It never occurs to him to strike a match, and so find out how the table happens to be moving. Furthermore, he seems to be unfamiliar, not only with the commonplaces of physical experiment, but also with the methods and history of his own occult science. This is shown by his report of a preposterous encounter with the ghost of an unnamed composer—obviously Edward MacDowell. Had he prepared himself for this test by reading "The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism," by Hereward Carrington (*Small-Maynard*, \$2), or any other such book, he would have known how such elemental tricks are done. As it is, this MacDowell episode reveals not only execrably bad taste, but also an astounding and magnificent willingness to be bamboozled.

I have devoted so much space to this superficial and amateurish book, not because it is worth two lines in itself, but because it is enjoying a wide circulation and will no doubt make many converts to the faith. Garland calls a long roll of "doctors" and "professors" who speak for the spooks. As a matter of fact, most of Garland's "scientists" are of the one-horse, fresh water sort, and of the remainder, some are notorious fanatics and others are obviously to be pitied. Taking the best of them—Lodge, Crookes and Wallace—their evidence only shows that they are exceedingly willing to believe. Garland seems to think that these men represent the highest conceivable peaks of human acumen, and that their mere belief is sufficient to prove anything. In reality they stand almost alone, and some of the men who oppose them are vastly their superiors.

A number of other occult books have come to hand of late. One is "THE LAW OF THE RHYTHMIC BREATH," by Ella Adelia Fletcher (*Fenn*, \$1.50). In this amazing encyclopedia of non-

sense we are introduced to the "science" of the Hindoo sages. They teach the doctrine, we are told, that health may be preserved by breathing through one nostril at a time—first the right and then the left, in various cabalistic combinations. There is a lot of quasi-scientific chatter about the Central Dynamo and positive and negative currents, and we are asked to believe that the antique Hindoos were familiar with the phenomena of electricity. As a matter of fact, all that the book proves is that both the Hindoos and the author are entirely ignorant, not only of electricity, but also of the elements of physiology. And yet, considering the present craze for occult rubbish, particularly in the domain of self-healing, there is no doubt that the book will have a large sale, and that hundreds of foolish readers will try to cure their rheumatism by turning their noses into induction coils.

An even more ridiculous collection of absurdities is "THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW AND BEYOND," by Rose M. Carson. This book is well printed on large paper and bound impressively in lavender, but it bears neither price nor publisher's name. It purports to be a collection of theological essays by various disembodied spirits. As a frontispiece there is a portrait labeled "The Supreme Divine Ruler of the Spheres"—by which I understand the author to mean the Deity. The gentleman depicted wears a full beard, a carefully waxed mustache, a white shirt and a white Oriental headdress. He looks like a prosperous young dentist. In the 340 pages that follow one finds a series of stale variations upon the themes of Swedenborg's "Heaven and Hell." The book, in general, is well worth reading. You will get at least one loud laugh a chapter.

Gilbert Chesterton's "ORTHODOXY" (*Lane*, \$1.50) is less frankly occult. The book pretends to describe the author's gradual conversion to Christianity, and it is written with all his accustomed wit, ingenuity and vivacity. It is,

indeed, the best argument for Christianity I have ever read—and I have gone through, I suppose, fully a hundred. But after you lay it down you suddenly realize that Chesterton has been trying to prove, not only that Christianity is reasonable, but also that supernaturalism is truth. His argument, indeed, crossing the bounds of merely sectarian apologetics, passes on to the fundamental problem of philosophy: what is true? The materialists answer that anything man can prove is true. Chesterton answers that anything man can believe with comfort is true. Going further, he maintains that anything which gives disquiet is, *ipso facto*, false.

Here we have pragmatism gone to seed, and here we have, too, a loud "No" to all human progress. As a matter of fact, the world gets ahead by losing its illusions, and not by fostering them. Nothing, perhaps, is more painful than disillusion, but all the same, nothing is more necessary. Because there were men willing to suffer painful doubts hundreds of years ago, we civilized white men of today were born without our ancestors' harassing belief in witches. Because a horde of impious critics hang upon the flanks of our dearest beliefs today, our children, five hundred years hence, will be free from our present firm faith in political panaceas, unlucky days, dreams, hunches and the influence of mind over matter. Disillusion is like quinine. Its taste is abominable—but it cures. Not even Chesterton, with all his skill at writing, and with all his general cleverness—and he is the cleverest man, I believe, in the world today, though also one of the most ignorant—can turn that truth into anything else.

Two unpretentious books of sound and uncommon merit stand out from the month's heap. One is a study of the mental processes of an habitual criminal in conflict with society, and the other is an attempt to analyze the mental processes of a young woman about to be married. In many ways the two books are as far apart as Haydn and Richard Strauss—or Kipling and

Mrs. Hemans—or Heaven and Hell—but one thing they have in common, and that is an indefinable air of reality.

The crook book is called "9009" and it is by two men, James Hopper and Fred. R. Bechdolt (*McClure*, \$1.50). Judging by certain correspondence recently appearing in the literary gazettes I fancy that Bechdolt furnished the facts and Hopper wrote the story. This Hopper, let it be said, knows how to write. He uses the parts of speech with economy and understanding; he builds climaxes with sure art; he senses the significance and importance of an episode, and he is ruthless in his slaughter of non-essentials. The result is a story that works itself out as simply and as inexorably as "Lord Jim."

John Collins, the hero of this absorbing chronicle, is a thoroughly bad lot. For half a dozen years he eludes the law, but finally some blundering sheriff takes him and he goes to prison. His keepers, observing his low brow and gleaming eye, set him down as a dangerous man, and so proceed to reduce him to docility—or to "break" him, as they say. Their intentions here are honest and even laudable, but John Collins's badness is incurable, and the heavier the hand of discipline upon his shoulder the more he rebels. In the end he runs amuck, savagely and magnificently, and—but the story is not one that bears summarizing. Go read it yourself and think it over. It will entertain you and it may do you some good. It is something sincere and illuminating and different.

The book of maidenly meditation is called "THE ONE AND I," and the author subscribes herself Elizabeth Freemantle (*Jacobs*, \$1.50). I am not a woman myself and I am utterly unacquainted with Elizabeth Freemantle, and so I hesitate to say, without qualification, that her book is an accurate account of a young woman's emotions in the face of matrimony, for it may turn out that I am wrong, and even that the name is but a *nom de plume* for some humorous and immoral male with a hearty

appetite and a bald head. But all the same, it is quite safe (and very true) to say that the book, whether accurate or not, at least shows plausibility and ingenuity, and a keen appreciation, too, of that essentially feminine marvel, the process of reasoning by emotion.

The heroine is torn by two strong and conflicting desires. On the one hand she yearns for a career in the art of letters, and on the other she yearns for a union with her true love. The career is alluring, but it will mean long years of struggle, with a ceaseless, gnawing hunger for love. The union is alluring, too, but it will mean long years of toil with frying pan, darning needle and nursing bottle, with a ceaseless, gnawing hunger for self-expression and glory. And then, just as she is about to decide, apparently for the career, the hero falls ill—and it is all over with the poor girl! One gust of emotion, and her power of logical reasoning is about equal to her power of jumping over the moon.

In the department of prose fiction our national literature waddles along behind that of England, and in serious books we tread the ancient trail blazed by Germany, but in brewing nonsense we have no peers. Time was, perhaps, when England, with Lewis Carroll and W. S. Gilbert yet in harness, set the pace for us, but that time is far gone. Today we have more manufacturers of clever foolishness and better ones than any other country, and our presses pour out a never ending stream of books full of quaint conceits in picture and rhyme, of extravagant satire and delicious absurdity.

One such volume, recently published, is Francis W. Crowninshield's "MANNERS FOR THE METROPOLIS" (Appleton, \$1), an application of Gilbert's "Palace of Truth" plan of burlesque to the manuals of etiquette of the *Ladies' Home Journal* school. Thus, instead of laying down the orthodox rules for calling, Mr. Crowninshield tells his readers how to avoid calling at all—which last science, of course, is of far greater use and interest to every young man than its gentler predecessor. The

book is alive with new-laid wit and humor, and half a dozen grotesque drawings in color by Louis Fancher catch its spirit exactly.

Another clever tome is "THE HOLE BOOK," by the ever entertaining Peter Newell (Harpers, \$1). Here we have a chronicle of the damage done by a stray bullet fired into space by an immoral small boy. The course of the missile is shown graphically by a hole punched through the book from cover to cover, and on each page is one of Mr. Newell's extraordinary pictures, giving another chapter in the impossible history. Other books of the same refreshing cleverness are James Montgomery Flagg's "ALL IN THE SAME BOAT," a series of studies, in picture and rhyme, of the appalling bores who infest ocean steamers; and Oliver Herford's "THE SIMPLE JOGRAPHY" (Luce, 75 cents), a burlesque upon the school geography, with pictures by Cecilia Loftus and others. It looks easy to write nonsense of this sort, but in reality it requires a great deal more skill than writing theology.

The true humorist loves as he snickers, just as the born surgeon feels a vast kindness toward the appendix he excises. Even Thackeray, convinced that he was a cynic and trying hard to be bitter, couldn't smother his tolerant affection for Barry Lyndon. When he drew less felonious scoundrels, his natural impulse overcame him entirely, and so the whole world loves Deuceace, Yellowplush and Harry Foker today.

Mrs. Helen Green, being a true humorist, shows this benevolent weakness in "THE MAISON DE SHINE" (Dodge, \$1.50). The vaudevillains who appear in her stories can never hope to go to Heaven. Those that walk in pantaloons are alcoholic polygamists and full of equivocation and deceit, and those that wear long hose and false hips dally with backbiting, polyandry, chicanery and the flowing bowl. Hell stands agape for such as these, and the devil smacks his lips. Nevertheless,

Mrs. Green obviously loves them, and the reason therefore lies in the fact that a humorist, having no theology, knows that everything human is lovable.

The stories gathered here were written for a newspaper and many of them show signs that they were written in too much haste, but now and then a delicious page wipes out all memory of artificialities before and after it. On one such page there is a picture of the Mangles Four *en famille*—a picture full of insight and alive with the comic spirit. Again, what could be better than the story of Johnny Trippit's ascension from the Varieties to Broadway and of Mrs. Johnny's terrible revenge? Yet again, who will ever forget that most human of animals, the Property Man?

The slang that she writes is always natural and probable. It is not the elaborate, fantastic, studied speech of Artie and the Chorus Lady, but the easy, elemental slang of the refined knockabout artist and burlesque sou-brette—of the bartender, plain-clothes man, hack driver and stage hand.

A number of dramatical books of far more serious purpose stand on the shelf with "The Maison de Shine." The largest, thickest and most dignified of the lot is Paul Wilstach's "RICHARD MANSFIELD: THE MAN AND THE ACTOR" (Scribners, \$3.50). It is a volume that practically exhausts its subject, and there is little likelihood that any other work will ever supplant it.

One may urge against Mr. Wilstach that he goes to his hero's defense too valiantly and too often, but a moment's thought will show that this is an inevitable weakness in all first-hand biography. To write the history of a man out of your own recollection of him and intercourse with him, you must have had the run of his house and mind, and to have felt any impulse to seek this, you must have held him in uncommon esteem. No man knew Mansfield better than Wilstach knew him, and no man admired him more. One cannot explain this admiration save upon the assumption that, in the light

of clear understanding, the man was admirable.

Wilstach, it must be said, is by no means a mere special pleader. In general, the picture that he draws of Mansfield is a frank and free one, and it reveals all and singular of the man's weaknesses—his grotesque extravagance, his unbounded ambition, his excellent conceit of himself not only as an actor but also as a public character, his intolerance of opposition, his cruel wit, his easy descents from flamboyant heroics to wise compromise, his quick rages and patronizing forgivenesses, his general air of feudal grandiloquence and barbaric magnificence. The point is that Wilstach, while admitting these things, explains them upon the ground of irresistible impulse and unfortunate environment, and so excuses them as being beyond remedy. Of this theory it may be said that it is as plausible, to say the least, as that older and more popular one which ascribed Mansfield's eccentricities to a league with the devil.

He fails, however, to point out Mansfield's two prime faults as a producing manager—his persistent confusion, natural enough to an actor, of theatrical effectiveness with dramatic value, and his curious detachment from the great movement toward naturalness which marked his time. He was the most splendid of contemporary actors, perhaps, but he was still only an actor—and an actor's yearning to put the clock ahead is always conditioned by his greater yearning to win the fleeting applause of the great inert mob that holds it back.

But it is unfair to bring up such matters in a review of Mr. Wilstach's book, for he has deliberately fought shy of criticism. His purpose, as he explains it, is to tell the story of the man's life and dreams, and this he has done most admirably. The book has reality in it, and in its telling there is grace and skill. From the first page to the last it holds the interest unflinchingly.

A book of criticism, frank and unabashed, comes next. It is "THE

AMERICAN STAGE OF TODAY" and its author Walter P. Eaton (*Small-Maynard*, \$1.50). Mr. Eaton succeeded James Huneker and John Corbin as dramatic critic of the *New York Sun*, and so, sitting at the desk once adorned by these famous men, he managed to absorb, in some telepathic manner, a measure of the faults and virtues of each. In consequence, his book shows a bit of James's gift for superficial iridescence and a bit of John's abyssmal profundity—a smear of James's liking for the dazzling and devilish and a stain of John's deep faith in miracles and university pundits. The result is the most interesting volume of dramatic criticism in English, save one, since "Iconoclasts."

Mr. Eaton makes solemn oath, in his preface, that he has no dramatic creed, and it is very likely that he believes this to be true, but the observant reader, after a few chapters, begins to dissent. As a matter of fact, Mr. Eaton is the first of the dramatic pragmatists, and his god is Professor William James. He quotes Professor James again and again and the test that he applies to each succeeding play is the pragmatic question: considering everything, is it good enough? This test is far easier and far more workable than Mr. Corbin's, which is: what would the faculty of Harvard say?—or Mr. Huneker's, which is: how many Beatitudes are disproved?—or Mr. Winter's, which is: how long has the author been dead? It is, indeed, the test of a tolerant and humane critic, for it allows some merit to the ephemeral journalistic nonsense of "The Witching Hour" and to the platitudinous banalities of "The Servant in the House," the while it bars out entirely the worst of the products of Sardoodledom and the Palmy Days.

But Mr. Eaton will outlive, let us hope, this reverence for Professor James, just as he will outlive his New England bringing up—which last reveals itself in the constant assumption that a play which preaches a sermon is, in some unaccountable way, a shade better than a play which doesn't preach a sermon. When he gets rid of James he will dis-

cover that, after all, pragmatism is not a philosophy, but an apology for the lack of a philosophy. A careful study of the recent history of the English stage (say from November 11, 1865, when Tom Robertson sent the first shell screaming into the camp of the ancients) will teach him that criticism, to be effective, must have a goal, and that it must strive for that goal with a certain fine frenzy. Because William Archer saw such a goal ahead in the melancholy early eighties there is a Pinero today. To put it more simply, I should like to see Mr. Eaton work out a creed of his own—and then fight for it like a Tartar.

But let him be wary of Archer's ponderosity, the while he evolves his Archer-like theory of the drama. His present style, as it appears in this book, has enough of Broadway in it to flavor the flatness got at Harvard, and this flavor must be kept there. One is reminded, more than once, of the vivacious A. B. Walkely, but Walkely's copious borrowings from the more impossible languages are pleasantly absent. Mr. Eaton, in a word, writes rattling good journalese—and it gives the reader two hours of unmixed delight.

"As OTHERS SEE US," by John Graham Brooks (*Macmillan*, \$1.75), is one of those rare books which help to civilize the reader while they delight him. It is a volume that all professional patriots, Sons of the Revolution, Colonial Dames and members of Congress should be compelled to read forthwith, on penalty of the bastinado. It is the long-sought antidote to "The Star Spangled Banner."

Mr. Brooks's plan is so simple that it is astonishing that it was not put into execution years ago. Briefly, he has made a digest of all the books written about the United States by foreign visitors, from the time of Washington to the time of Roosevelt—and then compared the jury's verdict with the facts. The result is a volume of vast and abounding interest. We see ourselves literally "as others see us," and the spectacle, if it is not always sooth-

ing, is at least exceedingly instructive and sobering.

Let no one, however, make the mistake of supposing that this thick volume is a mere encyclopedia of abuse. Mr. Brooks has chosen flattering criticisms as well as peevish ones, and in this very impartiality, indeed, lies the chief value of his book. Furthermore, he has weighed and digested, as well as recorded, and his conclusions are those of a tolerant and just judge. When, in the end, he lays down the verdict that our national faults—of political charlatanry, of snobbery, of blatancy—are outweighed by our national virtues, you agree with him, not because you are an American, but because his logic is without a flaw.

Mr. Brooks's authors, it is curious to note, seem to be but dimly aware of that ferocious intolerance which is at the bottom of many specific American evils. Your typical American, who is extravagantly moral, holds it as the first article of his creed that all who differ with or from him (I'll be hanged if I know which word is correct) are not only ludicrous fools, but also dangerous maniacs and criminals. This is the simple and ingenuous Rule No. 1 of the great masses of the plain people, and its result is a collection of bizarre laws and artificial crimes that would make a German police inspector laugh himself to death. Another result is the continued importance in our national life of the professional moralist—a gentleman who went out of office in Europe a good while ago. There are hundreds of towns in the South in which the local Wesleyan clergyman is still, *ex-officio*, the leading citizen, and even in New York such men as Comstock and Parkhurst exercise a very real power.

Meanwhile, every American with natural appetites is a criminal. I, myself, am a felon—at least in intent. I found it out a few months ago, on a Sunday evening. Dining with a friend in a provincial city, I proposed that we spend the rest of the evening in for-

getting our sorrows. We thereupon discussed ways and means, and finally drew up a list of three *divertissements* agreeable to our fancies and habits. And then, of a sudden, we made an alarming discovery, to wit: that all of them were forbidden by law!

Were any of these desired diversions immoral, disorderly or hurtful to others? Not a one! Did we yearn to beat up the watch, like Sir John Brute, or carry off some merchant's shutters, or disturb the solemn orisons of the Salvation Army? Not at all! The most felonious of our three plans was this: to fare forth to some public hall, listen a while to some passable orchestra and then drink a few steins of beer. Alas! the laws of this city provided a fine of \$100 for anyone who gave an orchestra concert on the Sabbath, and a further fine of \$500 for anyone who sold a stein of beer, with imprisonment overnight for anyone caught drinking it.

Those who have lingered lovingly over the pages of Harper's Biographical Edition of Thackeray know the delightful introductions provided for all of the thirteen volumes by the great novelist's daughter, Anne Ritchie. Lady Ritchie has a good deal of her father's humor and not a little of his skill at making the mere names of history blossom into human beings. In her latest book, "THE BLACKSTICK PAPERS" (Putnam's, \$1.75), these talents combine to produce an indefinable charm. She discourses of Haydn, of Joachim, of Felicia Hemans, of "Jacob Omnium" and of Tourgénéieff, and somehow her rambling essays make one know these worthies better. There is nothing very novel or startling in her book, and now and then (as in her chapter on Haydn, for instance) she has scarcely anything to say. But if, at times, one drowns a bit over her pages, the drowsiness is of that rare sort which leads, not to leaden, snoring slumber, but to day dreams of old books and old music, half memory and half imagination.

THAT PUP—

by Ellis Parker Butler. (*McClure*, \$1)
 Another good short story by the author of "Pigs Is Pigs." Some of the rare flavor of "The Jumping Frog."

THE RUBAIYAT OF A HUFFY HUSBAND—

by Mary B. Little. (*Badger*, \$1)
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by Augustus Thomas. (*Harpers*, \$1.50)
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PICTURES OF OLD CHINATOWN—

by Arnold Genthe, with text by Will Irwin. (*Moffatt-Yard*, \$1.50)
 The pictures are interesting as records of a lost city, but have little artistic value. Mr. Irwin's text is full of his usual charm and feeling for color. The book is beautifully printed.

NANCY MACINTYRE—

by Lester Shepard Parker. (*Badger*, \$1.25)
 A romance in rhyme—almost as bad as "Lucille."

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I therefore bought various brands of cold cream and skin foods and massaged my face with most constant regularity, hoping to regain my former appearance. But the wrinkles simply would not go. On the contrary, they seemed to get deeper. Next I went to a beauty specialist, who told me she could easily rid me of my wrinkles. I paid my money and took the treatment. Sometimes I thought they got less, but after spending all the money I could afford for such treatment I found I still had my wrinkles. So I gave up in despair and concluded I must carry them to my grave. One day a friend of mine who was versed in chemistry made a suggestion and this gave me a new idea. I immediately went to work making experiments and studying everything I could get hold of on the subject. After several long months of almost numberless trials and discouragements I finally discovered a process which produced most astounding results on my wrinkles in a single night. I was delighted beyond expression. I tried my treatment again, and lo and behold! my wrinkles were practically gone. A third treatment—three nights in all—and I had no wrinkles and my face was as smooth as ever. I next offered my treatment to some of my immediate friends, who used it with surprising results, and I have now decided to offer it to the public. Miss Gladys Desmond, of Pittsburg, Pa., writes that it made her wrinkles disappear in one night.

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THE SMART SET FOR MARCH

THE complete novel which will appear in the MARCH number of the SMART SET is "The Shuttlecock," by Neith Boyce. This is a story of modern metropolitan life, dealing largely with the conditions that combine to make so many present day marriages unhappy. The author's characterization of the allurements that draw men away from the family fireside, and of certain phases in the feminine make-up that cause the marriage yoke to gall is strong and convincing. Neith Boyce, who is Mrs. Hutchins Hapgood, is one of the cleverest of the younger novelists.

Some of the features of the SMART SET for March are:

THE TRESPASSER

By W. H. G. Wyndham Martyn

The leading character in this story is a young fellow of delightful personality, with an ease and *sang froid* that compel admiration. His verbal set-to with old farmer Kendon is a triumph of wit and audacity that pulls him out of a tight place—and into the kindly graces of the old man's attractive daughter.

THE FOOL

By Violet Melville

A powerful story in which grimness and pathos are blended—a story of a man among men, unblest by nature, his lot cast in the Brazilian wilds, mocked by his companions with the derisive name, "The Fool," yet gloriously triumphant in the end and loved by those about him with a love rarely known between man and man.

THOSE WHO ARE NOT HUNGRY

By Beatrix Demarest Lloyd

An essay in a gentle, satirical vein on the extremes to which the eating habit has gone. Everybody eats nowadays on every possible occasion—it's the only way we know to entertain people. But there's an art in eating and in giving to eat.

THE DAUGHTER OF A PASHA

By Mary Hastings

A story of the Orient—a daring American and his romantic rescue of a dark-eyed maiden in the shadow of the pyramids. He stole her from her cruel persecutors successfully enough, but what was he to do with her then? That's the story.

THE CASE OF GOOD OLD BERTIE

By Vanderheyden Fyles

Old Bertie—good-hearted chap, and all that sort of thing, don't you know! But always does the wrong thing! The fellows at the club were very sorry when it all came out, but, really, it was all his own fault. Mr. Fyles tells a delightful tale of a New York clubman of a peculiarly ingenuous nature, whose simple naivete got him into constant difficulties. He finally blundered once too often and it was all up with him.

AN IMPRACTICAL JOKE

By Grace Tabor

There is nothing in fiction of wider appeal than the comedy of domestic life. Miss Tabor tells a story of a joke that a young wife played upon her husband—and the almost disastrous results.

MAMSELLE VIOLETTE

By E. Clayton McCants

A tale of old Louisiana life, full of the languorous charm of the old Southern days, and told in the spirit of the great French story tellers. Mamselle Violette was a delightful character—but she was very foolish!

CHANCE

By Charles Somerville

The terrible catastrophes that impend on a chance move were never more realistically shown than in this story. Grim, gruesome realism is the keynote of this tale of a phase of New York life rarely seen by outsiders save through a veil of unreality.

The NEW YORK PLAYS criticized by CHANNING POLLOCK
The NEW BOOKS reviewed by H. L. MENCKEN

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